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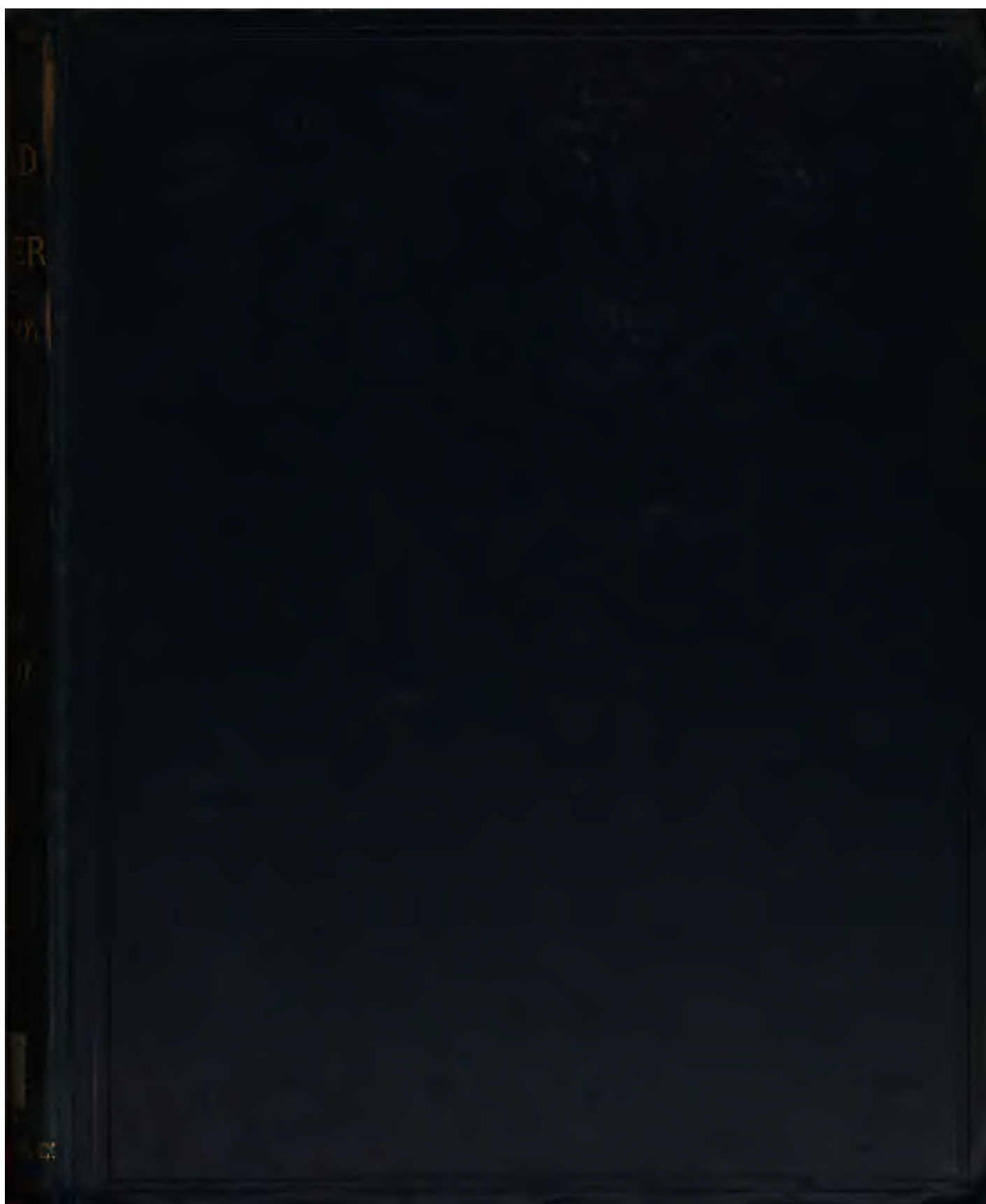
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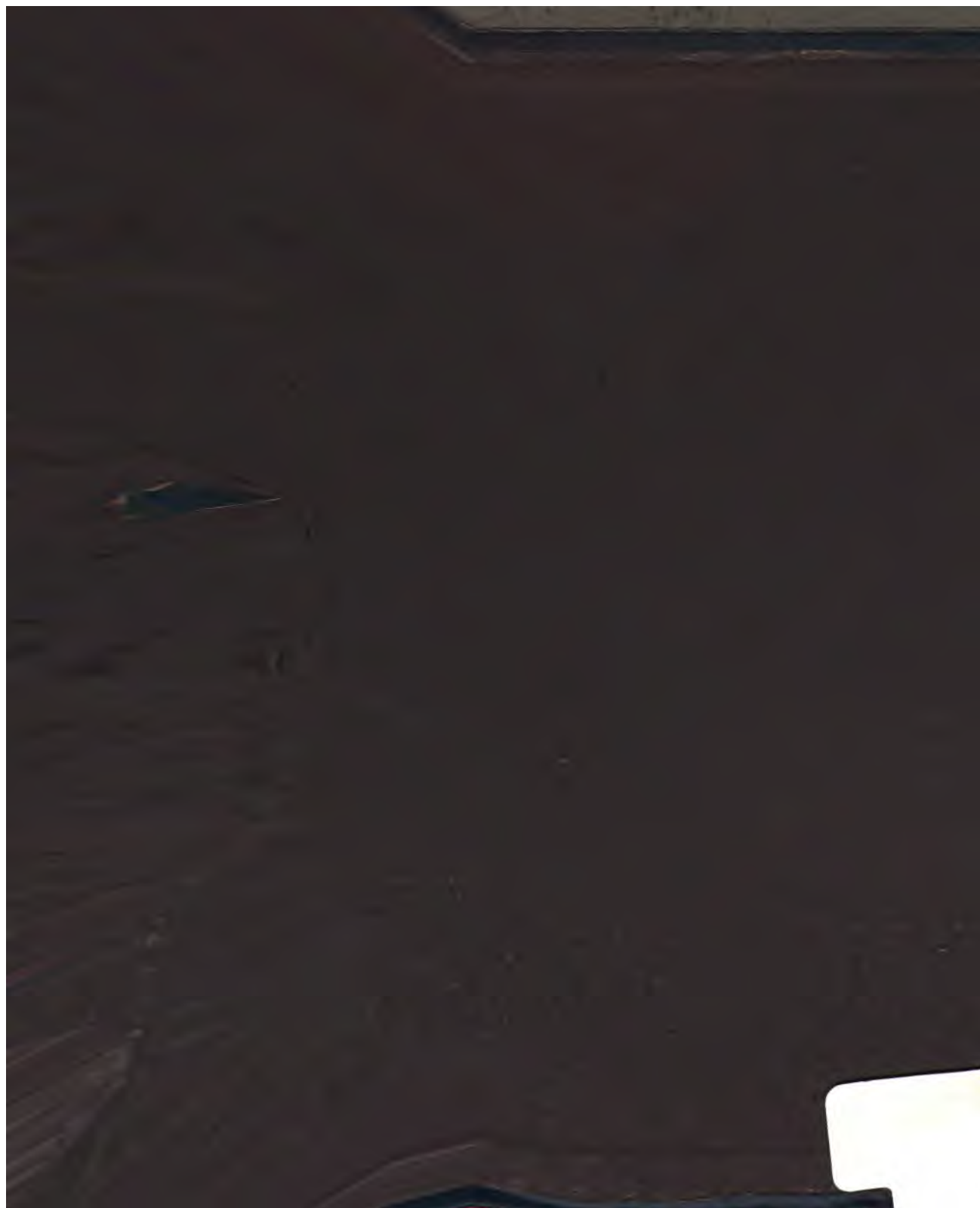
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THE ILIAD OF HOMER

DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

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BOOK VII.

How Aias man against man did battle with Hector the godlike.

SO spake he, and Hector the glorious rushed through the gate straightway :
Sped with him the prince Alexander his brother ; full fain were they
Of the onset, the souls of them both were afire for the joy of the fray.
As to shipmen whose hearts for his coming have fainted a God hath sent
A breeze, when with tugging the oars smooth-shaven their strength is spent 5
Smiting the sea, and their limbs are fardone with weariness-pain ;
So to Trojans whose hearts for their coming had fainted appeared these twain.
Then slew Alexander a prince of Arnê's royal race,
Menesthius, born to Arêthoüs of the iron mace
Of Philomedusa the lovely-eyed, fair Arnê's queen : 10
Hurled Hector at Etoneus with his long lance bitter-keen ; [away.
Through his neck 'neath the rim of the helmet it plunged, and his strength fled
Then Glaukus the son of Hippolochus, captain of Lycia's array,
Smote Iphinoüs with his javelin amidst of the mighty fray,—
Dexius' son, as he leapt on the car by his swift mares drawn,— 15

On the shoulder, and dashed him to earth, and the strength of his limbs was gone.

And it was so, when grey-eyed Athênè the Goddess beheld these twain
Smiting the Argive men in the battle's desperate strain,
That she leapt from Olympus' brow, and adown to the earth hath she darted :
Unto Ilium the holy she sped. But to meet her Apollo upstarted 20
From Pergamus' height, for his heart on the help of the Trojans was set.
And face to face by the oak the God and the Goddess met.
Then first did the Zeus-begotten, the king Apollo, cry :

“ Wherefore again in thy fury, O daughter of Zeus most high, [25
Hast thou come from Olympus, and why hath thy great heart sped thy flight ?
Is it so, that thou longest to give to the Danaans victory-might,
Forasmuch as thou hast no pity for all these Trojans slain ?
But and if thou wouldst hearken to me, sure this would be more for thy gain—
Now make we their warfare to cease, and give we the battle breath
For to-day, thereafter again shall they fight, till the goal of death 30
For Ilium be won, forasmuch as this is the heart's desire
Of the Queens of the Deathless, to waste yon city with sword and fire.”

And to him the Goddess Athênè the grey-eyed made reply :
“ Yea, so shall it be, Far-darter ; for this cause down from the sky
From the height of Olympus to Troy and Achaia's armies I came. 35
Yet tell to me, how art thou minded to quench the battle-flame ?”

And Apollo the King made answer, the Zeus-born uttered his rede :
“ Let us waken the spirit of Hector the queller of the steed,
If the hero will haply defy some chief of his Danaan foes
Alone with him man against man in the grim fight-grapple to close : 40

And jealousy-stirred the brazen-harnessed Achaian throng
 Shall find them a man to battle with Hector the godlike-strong."

So spake he, and so was Athênê the grey-eyed minded to do.
 But the spirit of Priam's son, of the prophet Helenus, knew
 How the Gods everlasting communed, and the thing that seemed them good. 45
 And he spake—for he fared through the press till by Hector's side he stood :

" Hector thou son of Priam, Zeus's counsel-peer,
 Wilt thou heed me?—behold thy brother am I—I beseech thee hear :
 Now bid that the rest of the sons of Achaia and Troy sit down,
 And thyself defy thou Achaia's chiefest in battle-renown 50
 To strive with thee, man against man, alone in the terrible fray :
 For not yet is thy weird to light on the doom of thy dying day,
 For so have I heard the voice of the Gods that abide for aye."

So spake he, and Hector rejoiced at the word with exceeding joy.
 Forth to the midst hath he strode, and he stayeth the ranks of Troy, 55
 Grasping his spear by the midst, and all at the wave of his hand
 Sat down, and sat the Achaians at Lord Agamemnon's command.
 And anigh them Athênê sat, and Apollo Silverbow,
 In semblance as birds of the air, as vultures in outward show,
 On the lofty oak-tree of Zeus Allfather, the Aegis-King, 60
 Beholding with joy how, rank upon rank thick-clustering,
 Sat bristling with buckler and helmet and spear that warrior-ring.
 And as over the sea's face spreadeth a shiver of Zephyrus' breath,
 Springing up out of calm, and the shining sea groweth dark underneath,
 So seemed they, so stirred they, the ranks of Achaian and Trojan folk, 65

On the plain as they sat, and Hector amidst of the war-hosts spoke :
“ Hear me, ye Trojans and mailèd Achaïans battle-renowned,
To the end I may utter the words that my heart for my lips hath found :
High-thronèd Kronion hath disannulled our covenant-oath,
For the thoughts of his heart and his dooming are evil against us both, 70
And shall be, till Troytown beautiful-towered of your hands be ta'en,
Or ye by the sea-tracking galleys be overmastered and slain.
Yet hear—forasmuch as amongst you Achaïa's chiefest be,
Let the hero whose spirit stirreth him up to battle with me
Step forth of you all for your champion to stand against Hector to-day. 75
For thus do I promise—let Zeus be witness of this that I say :—
If so be that he lay me low with the keen-edged brass, let him strip
From my body mine armour, and bear it away to his hollow ship :
But my corse to mine home shall he give, that in death I may have on the pyre
Of the sons and the daughters of Troy the rightful honour of fire. 80
And if I overcome him and slay, and Apollo vouchsafe me renown,
I will strip off his war-gear, and bear it to holy Ilium-town,
And will hang it on high on the wall of Archer Apollo's fane ;
But his corse will I yield to his friends to bear to the galleys again,
That the long-haired sons of Achaïa may lay his bones in the ground, 85
And by broad-flowing Hellespont's strand may uppile him a sepulchre-mound.
And one shall say—some man of the days that are yet for to be—
In his long swift galley riding the ridges of wine-dark sea :
‘ The barrow is this of a hero who perished long ago,
Who played the man when Hector the glorious laid him low.’ 90

So shall they say, and for ever my deathless renown shall grow."

So spake he, and hushed were they all, and none spake word for a space,
Ashamed to deny him, yet fearing to meet him face to face.

But after a long time rose Menelaus, and bitterly chode
Reproaching the heroes, while groaned his spirit beneath its load : 95

"O blustering vaunters!—not men of Achaia, but women be ye!
Surely a horror of horrors, a stain and a shame shall it be
If now there be found for Hector no champion of Danaan birth.
Ha, better it were that ye all should turn unto water and earth,
Spiritless there as ye sit, inglorious, and nothing worth ! 100
But I, even I, will arm me against him : I ween from on high
Be the issues of victory held of the Gods that never die."

So spake he, and dight him in goodly battle-gear for the strife.
Then, O Menelaus, on thee had arisen the end of thy life
At Hector's hands : of a mightier far hadst thou surely been slain, 105
But the Kings of Achaia upsprang, and they caught thee, to make thee refrain :
And Atreus' son Agamemnon, the lord of many folk,
Himself by the right hand seized thee, and out from the heart he spoke :

"Thou art mad, Menelaus, O fostered of Zeus!—no time it is
For such madness!—refrain thee, how troubled soever thy heart be for this ;
Nor be moved for contention's sake to fight with a mightier than thou,
Even Hector, Priam's son :—there be others that hate him, I trow :—
Yea, even Achilles hath shuddered in glory-wafting fight
To meet this man ; and what is thy might to Achilles' might ?
Nay, turn thou and sit thee down mid the men of thy warrior-band : 115

The Achaïans shall find them a champion against yon Trojan to stand.
Be he never so dauntless-valiant or tireless of toil, full fain,
I ween, shall he rest his knees, if he haply return again
Alive from the fury of war and the terrible battle-strain."
So spake he, and turned his brother's heart from the desperate deed, 120
Forasmuch as he counselled aright, and the hero hearkened his rede,
And with joy did his henchmen take from his shoulders his war-array.
Then Nestor amidst of the Argives arose, and thus did he say :
 "O shame ! on Achaïa is fallen a heavy grief and a sore !
Bitterly Peleus would groan, that chariot-champion hoar, 125
Mighty in Myrmidon folk-mote, a lord of council-rings,
Who questioned me once in his halls, and rejoiced at the tale of kings,
When he asked of the birth of the mighty, and lineage of princes would hear :—
Ah, were he told how they cower, all these, before Hector in fear, [130
On the Deathless with lifted hands and with passionate prayer would he call
That his soul from his body might flee adown unto Hades' hall.
O Zeus, Athênê, Apollo, that now as in years overpast
I were stalwart and young as when, where Keladon's stream floweth fast,
The Pylians were gathered to fight with Arcadia's spearmen tall
Where the waters of Jardanus fleet by Pheia's sea-washed wall, 135
When Ereuthalion for their champion arose, a godlike wight.
In the battle-gear of Arêithoüs were his shoulders dight,—
Of godlike Arêithoüs, the warrior-king, who bare
Grim surname, the Mace-man, of men and of women girded fair ;
For with spear long-shafted he fought not, nor arrows that smite from afar, 140

But with mace of the massy iron he rifted the ranks of war.
 But Lykurgus by guile, and in nowise by prowess, the death of him wrought,
 For he lay in wait in a crag-walled road, where availed him naught
 That iron mace, for the spear out of ambush suddenly crashed [145
 Through the midst of his body, and backward adown on the earth was he dashed.
 And his war-gear, brazen Arès' gift, was the slayer's spoil,
 And thereafter he bare it himself through the War-god's battle-toil.
 But Lykurgus in process of time waxed old in his halls, and his gear
 He gave to his henchman Ereuthalion, in battle to bear.
 So there in the Mace-man's harness our best to the fight he defied : 150
 But they quailed and they shrank from before him, was none would his fury
 But I of my spirit unblenching was stirred the battle to try [abide.
 Against his prowess, albeit the youngest of all was I.
 So I fought and I overcame, for Athênê vouchsafed me renown.
 Ay, he was the tallest and strongest that ever mine hand smote down ; 155
 For this way and that way he lay outstretched, a giant frame.
 Ah, would I were young as then, and the strength of my thews were the same !
 Short time should he wait for the combat, Hector with helmet of flame !
 Lo, here be the chiefest heroes of all the Achaian race,
 Yet in none is there heart to meet this Hector face to face !" 160
 So chode he, the ancient of days, and there rose up nine at the word.
 First before all upsprang Agamemnon, the war-folk's lord ;
 Thereafter Tydeides arose, Diomedes the stalwart in fight ;
 Forth stood the Aiantes, clothed with battle-reckless might ;
 And Idomeneus then, and Idomeneus' fight-fellow, Mériones, 165

The battle-peer of the manslaying War-god, rose after these.
Thereafter Eurypylus, even Evaimon's glorious seed ;
And Thoas Andraimon's child, and Odysseus the shiftful at need.
So all these champions with Hector the godlike fain would have warred ;
But out spake Nestor again, Gerenia's chariot-lord : 170
 " Cast lots from the first to the last, that our champion be chosen so.
He shall profit the goodly-harnessed host of Achaia, I trow,
Yea, profit his own soul too, if he haply return again
Alive from the fury of war, and the terrible battle-strain."
 He spake, and the heroes marked their lots, and they cast each one 175
Into the helmet of Lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son.
And the war-folk prayed, and uplifted their hands to the Gods on high ;
And thus spake this one and that, looking up to the broad-arched sky :
 " Allfather, vouchsafe that the lot on Tydeides or Aias may fall,
Or the king of Mycenæ, the lord of the gold-abounding hall !" 180
 So spake they, and Nestor was shaking the helmet about and about ;
And behold, the token themselves had desired hath leapt thereout,
Even Aias' lot ; and the herald bare through the throng the same,
And from right to left unto chief after chief of Achaia he came.
But they knew not the shard for their own, and one after other denied, 185
Till he came to the man, through the throng as he fared upon every side,
Who had marked it and cast in the helm, even Aias the stalwart and brave ;
And he stretched forth his hand for his own, and the herald drew near and gave.
And he looked on the mark of his lot, and he knew, and his spirit rejoiced ;
On the ground by his foot hath he cast it, and crieth triumphant-voiced : 190

“ Friends, lo it is mine, this lot ; and glad with exceeding joy
Is my heart, for I ween I shall conquer him, Hector the godlike of Troy.
Go to, I will gird me for battle, mine harness of fight will I don ;
And do ye make prayer the while unto King Zeus, Kronos’ son,
In silence apart by yourselves, lest any of Troy’s folk hear— 195
Ay, or aloud, an ye will : there is no man on earth that we fear.
For none by his prowess shall cause me to flee in mine own despite,
Nor yet by his battle-cunning, for not so skillless of fight
In Salamis’ isle was I born and reared unto this my might.”

He spake, and to Zeus Kronion the King in prayer did they cry ; 200
And thus spake this one and that, looking up to the broad-arched sky :

“ Allfather, most glorious and mighty, who rulest from Ida’s crown,
Vouchsafe unto Aias the victory, grant to him battle-renown.
But and if it be Hector thou lovest and wardest with chiefest care,
Unto either of these grant prowess and glory in equal share.” 205

So spake they, and Aias arrayed him in brass-mail glittering bright.
And so soon as the flesh of his body was sheathed in harness of fight,
Forward he sprang, as cometh the War-god’s giant form
When he marcheth to battle with heroes uproused to the fury-storm
Of the heart-consuming strife which Kronion hath kindled from far. 210
So rushed forth Aias the giant, Achaia’s bulwark of war,
With a smile on his grim dark face : unswerving his feet drew near
To the foeman with long swift strides, while quivered his lifted spear.
And the sons of the Argives rejoiced and were fain as they looked upon him ;
And fear on the Troyfolk fell, that they quaked through every limb. 215

Yea, the heart in the breast of Hector himself beat fast and hard :
Yet he might not tremble now, nor shrink to the battle-guard
Of the shields of his men, for himself had bidden the foe to the field.
Nearer drew Aias and nearer, bearing his tower-like shield,
Brass laid upon sevenfold hide, which was fashioned of Tychius' hand, 220
The master of shield-hide-shapers, abider in Hylè-land ;
For he welded together the hides of seven bulls goodly and great
For the glittering buckler, and forged for the eighth a brazen plate.
So bearing his breast-fence Aias Telamon's son drew nigh,
Full nigh unto Hector, and stood, and rang his defiance-cry. 225

“ Hector, man against man shalt thou know of a truth this day
What manner of chieftains be found mid the Danaan war-array,
Though less than rank-rifting Achilles, the lion-hearted, be they.
But he lies mid his galleys, the beakèd questers of sea-tracks dim,
For against Agamemnon, the shepherd of hosts, his wrath is grim. 230
Yet such men are we as shall stand up before thee, and meet thy might,
Yea, many of us ;—come then, make thou beginning of fight.”

Answered him Hector the mighty, the lightning-morioned spoke :
“ Aias the Zeus-born, Telamon's son, war-chieftain of folk,
Not of mine heart, as the heart of a weak child, make thou assay, 235
Or the soul of a woman, that never hath looked on the battle-play.
Nay, well do I know of the onset, the spilling of heroes' life :
To the right, to the left, do I know to cast my shield in the strife,
The craft of the battle-steadfast, the sway of the stubborn targe. [240
And I know how to plunge mid the surges of fight when the mad steeds charge :

And I know of the War-god's death-dance, the revel of blenchless fight.
Yet would not I take thee unwares, and thou so goodly a wight,
By stealth-watch, but smite thee, if smite thee I may, in all men's sight." [spear,
He spake, and he swung up on high, and he hurled it, the long-shadowed
And he smote on the buckler of Aias, the sevenfold Targe of Fear, 245
On the brazen face thereof, the uttermost plate of the seven :
And through fold after fold, even six, the tireless brass hath riven :
In the seventh of the hides was it stayed. Thereafter the seed of Heaven,
Aias, hath hurled his lance long-shadowed across the field,
And it smote on the fair-fashioned round of the son of Priam's shield. 250
Crashed through the glittering buckler the great spear's thunderbolt head,
And it stayed not, but on through the curious work of the corslet it sped :
Through his tunic it shore ; by his flank cold-sliding it went full nigh
To the life, but he swerved aside, and the black death passed him by. [255
Then plucked they the spears long-shafted aback with their hands, they twain,
And as lions ravin-ruthless they fell to the battle again,
Or as wild boars out of the wood, whose strength the strong ones fear.
At the midst of the buckler of Aias the Priamid drave with his spear ;
Yet he cleft not the brass plate through, and aback was the point of it bent.
Then leapt on him Aias, and thrust at his shield, and with fury unspent 260
On went the lance, that he reeled in the midst of his onset-rush :
And it smote on his neck, and it gashed it, and forth did the dark blood gush.
Yet for all this not from the battle did bright-helmed Hector refrain,
But he drew back a step, and a stone in his brawny hand hath he ta'en, ~
A rock-shard rugged and black, lying huge on the war-winnowed field : 265

On the buckler of Aias he dashed it, the terrible sevenfold shield,
 Full on the midst of the boss, and the clanging brass rang round.
 Now stoopeth him Aias, a crag far huger his hand hath found :
 And he swung it on high and he hurled, putting measureless might to the cast ;
 And he burst in the targe with the crash of the boulder millstone-vast ; 270
 And he beat down his knees, that outstretched on his back the hero lay
 Down dashed on his shield, but Apollo upraised him again straightway. [then,
 And with clashing of swords had they closed, and the blades had been reddened
 Howbeit the heralds, the messenger-henchmen of Zeus and of men,
 Came, one of the Troyfolk, and one of Achaia's mail-clad sons, 275
 Talthybius, Idaius withal, the prudent-hearted ones. [word
 And they stretched forth their sceptres 'twixt hero and hero, and spake the
 Idaius the herald, the man of the deep heart wisdom-stored :

“ No longer, O dearly-belovèd sons, do battle nor fight,
 For that dear are ye both in Zeus the Cloudrack-sweeper's sight, 280
 And spearmen renowned are ye both—yea, all we know it, I trow :
 But the night cometh on : to the hest of the night we needs must bow.”

Answered him Telamon's son, strong Aias the battle-athirst :
 “ Speak thou unto Hector, Idaius, to say this peace-word first,
 Forasmuch as 'twas he that challenged our mightiest all to the fray. 285
 Yea, let him begin, and for me, I will do as Hector shall say.”

Then spake great Hector, the lord of the helmet of wavering light :
 “ Aias, since God hath vouchsafed to thee goodly stature and might,
 And wisdom, and none of Achaia in spear-craft may match him with thee,
 Now therefore refrain we from battle, and let our striving be 290

For to-day, but hereafter again will we fight, till the judgment of heaven
 Pass on us, and victory's crown unto thee or to me shall be given.
 Now the night cometh on : that we bow to the hest of the night is meet ;
 And so shalt thou gladden Achaia's sons by the ships of the fleet,
 And chiefly thy kinsfolk and comrades, the hearts that around thee cling. 295
 And for me in the mighty city of Priam the ancient king
 The sons of Troy and her daughters royally-robed shall rejoice,
 Who will enter, I trow, the holy assembly with suppliant voice.
 But come, let us give to each other gifts right glorious,
 That they of Achaia and Troy may say concerning us : 300
 ' For passion of heart-consuming strife did they fight, these twain,
 And thereafter they parted in friendship reconciled again.'"
 So spake he, and gave unto Aias the silver-studded glaive ;
 With its scabbard and sword-belt beautiful-shapen the gift he gave.
 And Aias a baldric hath given with purple splendour-dyed. 305
 So parted the heroes, and this to Achaia's war-host hied,
 And that to the throng of the Troyfolk fared. Right glad were they
 To behold him coming to meet them alive and whole from the fray,
 Escaped from the fury of Aias, the hands unmatched in the strife.
 To the city they led him, they whose souls had despaired of his life. 310
 And the goodly-harnessed Achaians the while brought Aias on
 Unto King Agamemnon the godlike, exulting for victory won.
 So when they were come to the tent of Atreus' son the King,
 The lord of the war-host slaughtered an ox for their banqueting,
 A male of the fifth year, slain to the Mighty, the Lover of Thunder. 315

And they flayed it, and wrought with the knife, and parted the carcase in sunder;
And deftly in pieces they carved it, and ran the long spits through, [drew.
And they heedfully roasted the same, and the roast from the flames they with-
So when they had ceased from their toil, and the banquet was all prepared,
They feasted, and none lacked aught of the banquet equal-shared. 320
And to Aias for honour was given the long unsevered chine
By wide-ruling King Agamemnon, the hero of Atreus' line.
But when craving for meat was gone, and their lips no more were athirst,
For the weaving of counsel-weft uprose the ancient first,
Even Nestor, whose counsel aforetime was ever accounted the best : 325
So with kindly intent he arose, and his rede to the kings he addressed :
 " Atreides, chiefs of the war-host, hearken the thing that I say :
Lo, many Achaïans with long-flowing hair lie dead this day :
Their purple blood with Skamander's fair-flowing stream hath been blended
By Arês the keen, and their souls unto Hades' halls have descended. 330
Therefore 'twere good that thou stay the Achaïans from fight with the dawn ;
And for us, we will gather the corpses, and hitherward let them be drawn
By our oxen and mules upon wains, and here will we burn them with fire
A little aloof from the ships, that the bones from the funeral pyre [335
To their children and homes may be borne, when cometh the day of returning
And earth will we bring from the plain, and around the place of the burning
One barrow for all will we pile, and beside it the towers tall
Will we rear of a rampart, a fence for the ships and ourselves withal.
And gates 'twixt tower and tower, close-fitting and strong, will we frame [340
In such wise that a pathway for chariots may lie through the midst of the same.

And a trench therewithout will we dig us, a foss deep-delved hard by ;
For a bulwark to right and to left of our steeds and our host shall it lie,
Lest haply the war of the chariots of Troy burst in like a flood.”
So spake he, and praised him the kings, and they deemed his counsel good.

On the citadel gathered the while the Troyfolk in council-ring, 345
With terrible turmoil, hard by the palace of Priam the king ;
And Antenor the wise-heart rose, and he uttered his counselling :

“ Hear, Trojans and Dardans, and ye of our war-aid battle-renowned,
To the end I may utter the word that mine heart for my lips hath found :—
Go to, let us yield up Helen the Argive Queen, and restore 350
The treasures withal unto Atreus’ sons ; for the oaths that we swore
Are broken the while we fight : no blessing nor gain unto us
Shall the toil of our hands accomplish, I trow, if ye do not thus.”

So spake he, and sat him down : forthright at his challenge-word
Rose Alexander the godlike, the fair-tressed Helen’s lord ; 355
And the winged words leapt from his lips, and wrathfully answered he :

“ Antenor, thou speakest as one that is nowise a friend unto me !
Thou lackest not wit for devising of other and wiser rede.
But and if of thine heart’s set purpose thou speakest in very deed,
Of a surety the Gods and none other have reft thy senses away ! 360
But amidst of the horse-quelling Trojans this one word will I say—
Yea, I declare it outright—I will not yield up my bride,
But the wealth that from Argos I bare to our halls o’er the harvestless tide,
All this will I give, and will add of mine own store more beside.”

So spake he, and sat him down in his place, and arose thereupon 365

The counsel-peer of the Gods, even Priam, Dardanus' son ;

And with kindly intent he spake, that old man reverence-crowned :

“ Hear, Trojans and Dardans, and ye of our war-aid battle-renowned,
To the end I may utter the word that mine heart for my lips hath found.

Now take ye your supper as heretofore in the leaguered town, 370

And set ye the guard of the watchmen, and be not of sleep borne down.

And at dawn to the hollow ships let the herald Idaius go,

That Atreus' son Agamemnon and Menelaus may know

Alexander's speech, who was cause of the war-feud bitter and stern.

This word of weight withal shall he say, and their will shall he learn, 375

If they haply be minded to cease from the wild-voiced war, till we burn

Our dead, thereafter again will we fight, till the judgment of heaven

Pass on us, and victory's crown unto us or the foe shall be given.”

He spake, and with right good will did they hearken his rede and obey :

So squadron by squadron they supped in the place where the war-host lay. 380

And with dawning Idaius fared to the hollow ships by the strand ;

And in folkmote the Danaans found he, the War-god's henchman-band,

By the stern of the galley of King Agamemnon : and strode straightway

Into their midst the loud-voiced herald, and thus did he say :

“ Hear, Atreus' son and the lords of the host of Achaia-land ! 385

King Priam and all the high-born Trojans have given command

That I tell you—if haply the thing in your eyes seem fair and good—

The word of the prince Alexander, for whose sake rose this feud :

What treasures soe'er in his hollow ships o'er the harvestless tide

Alexander bare unto Troy—would God ere then he had died !— 390

He willeth to yield, and to add of his own store more beside.

But the lady the wife of battle-renowned Menelaus the king

He refuseth to yield, albeit the Trojans require this thing.

This word moreover they bade me to say, that your will I may learn—

If perchance ye be minded to cease from the wild-voiced war, till we burn 395

Our dead, thereafter again will we fight, till the judgment of heaven

Pass on us, and victory's crown unto you or to us shall be given."

So spake he, and hushed were they all, and none made answer to him ;

Till cried at the last Diomedes, the battle-helper grim : [400

" Let none take the treasures wherewith Alexander for wrong would atone,

Neither Helen, for known is it now, yea, even to the fool is it known,

That the bands of destruction by this are around the Trojans thrown."

So spake he, and shouted the sons of Achaia with one accord,

Praising the dauntless rede, Diomedes the horse-queller's word.

Then to Idaius spake Agamemnon, a great folk's lord : 405

" Idaius, the word of Achaia's sons hast thou heard with thine ears,

In what fashion they answer thee ; and herein is my pleasure as theirs.

But as touching the dead and the burning of these, I gainsay not ;

For no man begrudgeth the right of the dead which have died, I wot,

To render the life-forlorn the atonement of fire with speed. 410

Of the oaths shall the Lord of Hêrê, the Thunderer Zeus, take heed."

Unto all the Gods for a witness he lifted the sceptre he bare.

And to Ilium the holy again did the herald Idaius fare.

And the Trojans and children of Dardanus sat in folkmote there,

All in a throng assembled, awaiting the coming again 415

Of their herald : and came Idaius, and stood in the midst of the men,
And he spake forth his message, and all they girded themselves with speed
To take up the corpses, and gather the wood for the bale-fire's need.
And forth of the fair-benched galleys the Argives hasted the while
To take up their dead, and to gather them wood for the funeral pile. 420

And now was the slant red sun just smiting the meadows with flame,
As out of the softly-fleeting deep-flowing Ocean he came,
Climbing the sky ; and the death-wains met in peace on the plain.
Then was it hard to discern 'twixt foeman and friend mid the slain.
But with water they washed the defilement from each blood-dabbled face, 425
Shedding the hot-gushing tear, and their dead to the wains did they raise.
But Priam the mighty forbade them to make lamentation, and so
Silently heaped they their dead on the pyres, heart-stricken with woe.
So they burnt them with fire, and to Ilium the holy they gat them again.
In the selfsame fashion the goodly-harnessed Achaian men 430
Heaped up their dead on the pyres, with anguish stricken-hearted ;
And they burnt them with fire, and aback to the hollow ships they departed.

Still was it twilight, nor yet was the flush of the dawning day,
When gathered around the pyre Achaia's chosen array.
And they brought thither earth from the plain, and over the ashes grey 435
One barrow for all did they pile, and beside it towers tall
Did they rear, and a rampart, a fence for the ships and themselves withal.
And gates 'twixt tower and tower, close-fitting and strong, did they frame,
In such wise that a pathway for chariots should lie through the midst of the same.
And a trench therewithout did they dig them, and delved it deep in the ground,

Broad was it and great ; and the wall with a palisade-breastwork they crowned.

So toiled they, the long-haired Achaians, at trench and giant wall.

But the Gods as they sat with Zeus in the Lightning-hurler's hall

Marvelled at that great work of the brazen-harnessed folk.

And Poseidon arose in the midst of them all, and the Earth-shaker spoke : 445

“ Allfather, shall mortal be found any more on the wide earth-plain

Who shall utter the purpose and thought of his heart to the Deathless again ?

Seest thou not how the long-haired folk of Achaia-land

Have built them a wall for a fence of their ships, and on either hand

Have dug them a trench, and have given to the Gods no hecatomb ? 450

Lo, far as the dawning shineth the fame thereof shall come ;

And men shall forget that wall which Apollo and I of yore

For the hero Laomedon builded with toil exceeding sore.”

Sorely disquieted answered him Zeus the Cloudrack-king :

“ Ha, Earth-shaker, Wide-overcomer, what ailed thee to say this thing ? 455

Some other perchance of the Gods might fear such purposing,

Who in might of his hands is weaker, whose prowess is nowise as thine :

But thy worship and thy renown spreadeth far as the dawn-rays shine.

Go to, when again the host of Achaia, the folk long-haired, [460

To their own dear fatherland-home with the host of their ships shall have fared,

Then shatter their wall, then utterly overwhelm it beneath the tide,

And again overspread with the tokenless sands the sea-beach wide,

And so shalt thou bring unto naught the Achaians' rampart of pride.”


So each unto other spake in Olympus the Deathless Ones.

And the sun went down, and wrought was the work of Achaia's sons : 465

And they slaughtered them beeves mid the tents, and they supped, and behold
Tall ships full many from Lesbos' isle, with wine deep-freighted, [there waited
Keels that Jèson's son Eunèüs had sent oversea,
Who was born to Jèson the shepherd of folk by Hypsipylè.
And to King Agamemnon and lord Menelaus of Atreus' line 470
Did Jèson's son give freely a thousand measures of wine.
So for wine to the ships did the long-haired sons of Achaia come.
There were some brought brass for a price, and the iron grey-gleaming some :
This came with the hides of oxen, and that with the unslain beast,
And another with captives of war : so they made them a plenteous feast. 475
All night for Achaia's long-haired sons was the banquet arrayed ;
And in Troytown revelled the Trojans and they of their warrior-aid.
And Counsellor Zeus all night caused tokens of wrath to appear
With terrible thunders ; and paleness gat hold of them all, and fear, [480
In such wise that they spilled from the beakers the wine on the earth : was none
Dared drink, or ever he poured unto Kronos' mighty son.
So they gat them unto their rest, and the boon of sleep they won.

BOOK VIII.

The counsel of Godfolk, the Trojans' prevailing, the glory of Hector.

 OW Dawn the Saffron-mantled was spread o'er the earth abroad,
And assembled of Zeus the Thunder-triumphant came Goddess and God
To the topmost crest of Olympus, the giant ridge-ribbed hill :
And he lifted his voice and he spake, and the Gods all hearkened his will :
 " Give ear, ye Gods, unto me, ye Goddesses, hearken my speech, 5
That the thing which my heart in my breast hath commanded my lips may teach.
Let none of the Daughters of Heaven nor Lords of Olympus essay
To countervail my word, but see that ye all obey,
To the end I may bring to pass right speedily this my device.
And whomso I mark of the Gods that in wilful-wayward wise 10
Shall sunder himself, to the helping of Trojan or Danaan to go,
To Olympus aback shall he flee, sore smitten with shameful blow.
Or grasp him will I, and will hurl him adown unto Tartarus' gloom
Far down, where under the earth is the nethermost Gulf of Doom :
There be the portals of iron, the threshold of brass is there : 15

Deep below Hades as earth is from heaven lies the Hell of despair.
 How unmatched of the rest of the Gods is my prowess then shall he know.
 —Nay then, make trial, ye Gods, that ye all may be certified so :
 Let fall from the floor of Heaven a rope of the twisted gold :
 Ye Gods, set hand thereto, ye Goddesses, take fast hold : 20
 Yet should ye not drag down from the sky to the dark earth-plain
 The Highest, the Lord of Counsel, though sorely ye labour and strain.
 But and if I should put forth my strength against yours, if my pleasure it be,
 With the earth would I hale you up, and therewithal the sea :
 Then would I bind that cord round a peak of Olympus flung, 25
 And all those things should abide in the firmament's mid-space hung.
 Even so in my might am I matchless all Godfolk and menfolk among."
 So spake he, and fell on them all a silence heavy and chill :
 Long sat they aghast at his speech, at the word of his masterful will.
 At the last the Goddess Athênê the grey-eyed made reply : 30
 " Allfather begotten of Kronos, most highest of all that be high,
 Well know we that this thy prowess may nowise be overborne :
 Yet for the sake of the Danaan heroes our spirits mourn,
 Who must perish and fill up the cup of a doom of bitter pain.
 Howbeit, since this is thy bidding, from battle will we refrain : 35
 Yet will we put in the hearts of the Argives our counsel, that so
 They may perish not all in the hour when the fire of thy wrath is aglow."
 Then answered and spake to her Zeus, and the Cloudrack-sweeper smiled :
 " Nay, be of good cheer, O Triton-begotten, belovèd child :
 I spake not with purpose of heart, but of grace unto thee am I fain." 40

He spake, and he yoked to his chariot his brass-hoofed coursers twain,
Swift-flying, with necks overstreamed with stormy golden mane. [his hand,
And he clad him with gold on his flesh, and the scourge hath he grasped in
Fair-fashioned of gold ; and now on the chariot-floor doth he stand ;
And he lasheth the horses to speed, and with right good will did they fly 45
In the midst of the space 'twixt earth and the star-bestudded sky.
And to Ida the fountain-flashing, the mother of beasts of the wold,
He came, unto Gargarus : there through his temple the incense rolled.
And the Father of Gods and Men there stayed on the holy ground
His steeds, and unyoked them, and poured a thick mist-veil around. 50
Then glory-exulting he sat on the mountain's topmost crown,
On the burg of the Trojan folk and Achaia's ships looking down.

And the long-haired Achaian men brake bread in the morning light
In haste mid their tents, and thereafter they clad them in harness of fight.
In the city the while the Troyfolk dight them in war-array, 55
Far fewer by tale, but for all this eager they were for the fray,
For of uttermost need must they fight for their children and wives that day.
Then wide were the gates all flung, and thereout did the war-folk pour,
Footmen and horsemen, and rose the battle's thunder-roar.
Ever the mid-space narrowed, till closing they mingled, and then 60
Clashed targets together, and spears, and the fury of brass-mailed men :
Dashed each against other the boss-studded bucklers that strong arms bore,
And up to the heaven went rolling the battle's thunder-roar ;
And the agony-scream and the triumphing-shout maddened up evermore
From the slayers and them that they slew, and the earth ran streams of gore. 65

Now all through the morning-tide, and still while the day waxed hot,
Fast fell the folk as the shafts from host unto host were shot.
But so soon as the sun bestrode the midmost height of the sky,
Then hung Allfather his golden Balances forth from on high ;
And therein two tokens of doom of the outstretcher Death he laid, 70
For the horse-quelling Trojans and men of Achaia brazen-arrayed.
By the midst did he grasp them and raise them—sank the doom-fraught day
Of the sons of Achaia, and low on the earth all-bountiful lay ;
But the fates of the people of Troy soared up to the broad-arched heaven.
And he sent forth the voice of his thunder from Ida, and flashed his levin 75
Over the men of the host of Achaia, and all they saw [awe.
And marvelled, and pale grew their faces, and thrilled were their spirits with
Then Idomeneus shrank, nor endured Agamemnon the king to remain,
Nor the henchmen of Arès the battle abode, the Aiantes twain.
Only Gerenian Nestor, Achaia's warder, stayed, 80
Yet not of his will, for his car-steed low by an arrow was laid
Which Paris had sped, the lord of Helen the beautiful-tressed,
That it smote on the head of the beast, where highest upriseth the crest
Of the horse-mane : the death-spot it is, the perilous place of bane :
And in agony high did he rear as the shaft plunged into his brain ; 85
And he tangled and troubled his yokefellows there as he writhed on the dart ;
And the old king sprang, and he slashed at the traces, to cut them apart
With his falchion ; but Hector's fleetfoot horses the while drew near
Through the turmoil of battle, bearing a valiant charioteer,
Even Hector, and there by his hand had the ancient hero died, 90

But with swift keen glance Diomedes the battle-helper espied ;
And he sent forth a terrible shout, and afar to Odysseus he cried :

“ Ho ! Zeus-born son of Laertes, Odysseus the shiftful-wise,
Whither art turning thy back, as the dastard in battle-throng flies ?
What ho ! have a care lest a spear, as thou fleest, thy back should sting ! 95
Shame ! stand—let us thrust yon savage away from the white-haired king ! ”

So cried he, yet heard not Odysseus the toil-tried godlike man,
But afar to the hollow galleys Achaian in haste he ran.
And Tydeides alone with none other plunged mid the heart of the fray,
Till in front of the chariot he stood of the Neleïd warrior grey ; 100
And the winged words leapt to his lips, and to Nestor thus did he say :

“ Good sooth, old sire, but the younger warriors press thee hard ;
And thy sinews by this be unstrung, and by eld is thy prowess marred,
And thy charioteer is a weakling, and these thy steeds be slow.
Go to, get thee up to my chariot, and so shalt thou see and know 105
The horses of Tros, how featly over the plain they race
Hither and thither, unperilled in flight and triumphant in chase,
Which I won from the panic-wafter Aeneas in battle-strain.
To thy steeds let thy henchman and mine give heed, but with these we twain
On the horse-quelling Trojans will dash, that Hector may understand 110
Whether or no my spear hath forgotten to rage in mine hand.”

So spake he, and Nestor Gerenia's horseman hearkened his rede.
To the old king's chariot-mares did the henchmen twain give heed,
Even Sthenelus valiant and strong and Eurymedon faithful and true ;
And on to the war-car of lord Diomedes stept they two. 115

And Nestor upgathered the glittering reins in his hands, and he lashed
The horses to speed, and swiftly adown upon Hector they dashed :
And as Hector came on in his fury, Tydeides hurled with his spear :
But lo, he hath missed him ; howbeit his henchman-charioteer,
Even Eniopeus the son of Thebaius the noble of heart, 120
As he swayed the chariot-reins, was cleft through the breast by the dart.
Down from the car was he hurled, and the fleetfoot steeds in affright
Swerved, and unstrung were his sinews, the life from his limbs took flight.
Then was Hector's soul for his charioteer overclouded with pain ;
Yet he left him to lie, though never so grieved for his comrade slain ; 125
And he hied him in quest of a stalwart charioteer : not long
Were his battle-steeds lacking a lord, for on Iphitus' scion strong,
Bold Archeptolemus, lighted he soon, and he caused him to stand
Behind his fleetfoot horses, and gave the reins to his hand.

Then had been havoc of slaughter, and ruin that none might amend, 130
And in Ilium's leaguered walls like lambs had the Trojans been penned ;
But with swift keen glance the Father of Gods and Men hath seen,
And with terrible thunder he hurled the lightning's lurid sheen.
Down before prince Diomedes' car to the earth it came,
And fearful to see was the light as it gleamed from the sulphur-flame : 135
Then terror-astonied the horses cowered beneath the car,
And from Nestor's hands the glittering reins flew, whirled afar :
And adread was his soul, and to lord Diomedes in haste spake he :

“ Tydeides, turn backward thy thunderfoot steeds from the battle to flee !
Discernest thou not how Zeus vouchsafeth not triumph to thee? 140

For Kronion bestoweth the battle-renown upon yonder foe
For to-day, but hereafter shall give it to us, if his pleasure be so.
But the purpose of Zeus no deathling may wrest, that it shall not befall,
Not though he be never so stalwart, for throned is his might above all."

Then spake Diomedes the battle-helper to Pylos' lord : 145

"Yea, wisely and well, old man, has thou spoken every word :
But into mine heart and my spirit there cometh the fierce shame-pang,
For Hector one day mid the Trojans shall utter his vaunting harangue :—
'Afraid was Tydeides, and fled from my face to the ship-fringed wave !'
So shall he boast :—that day let the earth gape wide for my grave." 150

Answered him Nestor, and spake Gerenia's car-borne king :

"Ah son of the war-wise Tydeus, what ailed thee to say this thing ?
Though Hector should call thee a dastard and weakling—what of the lie ?
Shall Trojan be fount to believe it ? Shall Dardan be blinded thereby ?
Shall the wives of the great-heart spearmen of Troy that false vaunt trust, 155
Even they whose lusty lords thou hast hurled to the bloody dust ?"

So spake he, and flightward he turned those thunderfoot horses aback [track
Through the turmoil of fight, while the Trojans and Hector pressed hard on their
With yelling unearthly, and hurled they the bitter shafts of war :
And Hector the mighty, the lightning-helmeted, shouted from far : 160

"Tydeides, the fleet-horsed Danaans wont to honour thee most
With the chief of the seats, and the wine of the feast, and the choice of the roast :
But now shall they scorn thee : a woman thou art in the testing day !
Out, paltry baby ! Not for such flinching of mine from the fray [165
Shalt thou climb to the height of our towers, shalt thou bear in thy ships oversea

Our wives into thralldom—ere then will I deal thy doom unto thee!"

So scoffed he: the soul of Tydeides wavered, exceeding fain
To turn back his horses, and man against man to meet him again.
Thrice in the balance he hung of the thoughts and intents of his will,
Thrice thundered the Counsel-father from Ida's crag-crowned hill, 170
Giving the Trojans a sign of the turning of victory's tide.
And cheering the Trojans on with a great voice Hector cried:

"Trojans and Lycians and Dardans that close in the grapple of fight,
Quit you like men, my friends, and remember your battle-storm-might!
I know that Kronion vouchsafeth me now of his gracious will 175
Triumph and high renown, for the Danaans naught but ill.
Fools! that devised forsooth yon ramparts worthless-frail
And crumbling-weak!—against my might shall they nothing avail!
Yon trench they have delved for their warding full lightly my horses shall leap.
And when at the last we shall win to their hollow ships by the deep, 180
Then see that ye have with you ravening flame of the red hearth-coals,
To the end I may burn their galleys with fire, and may speed the souls
Of the Argives to Hades, as 'wildered they gasp where the smoke-cloud rolls."

So spake he, and cried on his steeds fair-ranged in a goodly line
"Xanthus, and thou O Podargus, and Aithon, and Lampus divine, 185
Now make ye amends for the tending, for all the loving care
Of Andromachê, mighty-hearted Eëtion's daughter fair,
For that ever she poured out for you heart-gladdening golden grain,
Yea, mingled you wine for your drinking, whenso your spirit was fain,
Or ever she spread for her lord and her love the banquet array. 190

On then, and speed you in chase, to the end we may win for a prey
 The buckler of Nestor, the glory whereof in the heavens hath been told,
 The tale of the shield all-golden, whose very rods be of gold,
 And tear from the shoulders of lord Diomedes, the horse-quelling king,
 The corslet cunningly-wrought, of the God-smith's fashioning. 195
 Now if we might win for us these, I would hope this very night
 To drive the Achaïans aboard of their galleys for sea-borne flight."

So cried he, but Hêrê the Queen that vaunt might nowise brook ;
 But she started and stirred on her throne, that wide Olympus shook ;
 And she turned to Poseidon the mighty, and thus to the God spake she : 200

"Out on it, Earth-shaker, Wide-overcomer!—the heart of thee
 Is nowise moved with compassion for Danaans perishing,
 Albeit to Helikê's shrine and to Aigae their gifts they bring,
 Gifts many and lovely-fair!—ah, wish them victory thou !
 For if but in heart we were one, who are friends of the Danaans now, 205
 To thrust back the Trojans, and bridle the Far-beholder's will,
 Sorrow of soul should be his, lone-seated on Ida's hill !"

Sorely disquieted Earth-shaker answered, the sea-depths' lord :
 "Hêrê, thou reckless of tongue, what ailed thee to say this word ?
 I would not, I, that the rest of the host of Heaven should war 210
 With Zeus, with the son of Kronos, for greater his might is by far."

So spake they each unto other there in the heavenly place.
 But from trench unto rampart and ships, even all that middle space,
 With chariots was thronged, and with heroes, the wielders of the spear,
 Close-huddled, and he that pent them was Arês' battle-peer 215

Hector the son of Priam, when Zeus gave victory-fame.
And now had he burnt the shapely ships with devouring flame,
But the heart of the King Agamemnon did Hêrê the Queen inspire
To bestir him, and kindle with speed the Achaian battle-fire.
And he hasted along by the tents, by the ships of Achaia he sped, 220
With a great blood-crimson cloak in his brawny hand outspread ;
And he stood by the huge dark bulk of Odysseus' sea-swift keel,—
Midmost it was, that a shout unto either end might peal,
To where Aias, Telamon's son, had camped his warrior-band,
And the tents of Achilles, for these in the pride of their strength of hand 225
At the uttermost ends of the host had haled up their ships on the strand,—
And with voice far-piercing the din to the Danaans shouted he :
 " Shame on you, Argives !—ye bywords, ye dastards goodly to see ! [day
Where now are your boastings ?—ye said, ' We are best of the best ! ' in the
When ye babbled vainglorious vaunts as in Lemnos' isle we lay, 230
As ye feasted on stintless cheer of the flesh of the tall-horned kine,
As ye drank of the mighty bowls filled up to the brim with wine.
' Not a man of us all but will stand against Trojans a hundred,' ye said,
' Yea, or two hundred in fight ! '—and of one are ye now adread,
Even Hector, who soon shall consume the galleys with ravening flame ! 235
Zeus, Father, was ever a king god-fostered on whom there came
Such madness of folly from thee, to bereave him of glory's meed ?
Yet never, I swear it, by stately altar of thine did I speed
In my galley as hither to ruin I came, but in sacrifice
Did I burn on them all the fair beeves' fat-enfolded thighs, 240

In mine heart's fierce yearning to smite yon burg of the mighty wall.

O Zeus, vouchsafe me in any wise this one boon of all—

Suffer my people at least to escape, that they perish not so !

Not thus do thou bow the Achaians beneath their Trojan foe !” [245

Then Allfather was moved unto ruth by his tears, that he wept not in vain,

And vouchsafed him the lives of his folk, that the people should not be slain.

And he sent forth an eagle, the augury-peerless of all winged kind,

Bearing a fawn in his talons, the child of a fleetfoot hind.

And he dropped that fawn to the earth by the altar of Zeus most fair,

For unto the Lord of Boding the folk did sacrifice there. 250

And they saw, and they knew that Zeus had sped that eagle's flight,

And they leapt on the Trojans, and woke in their spirits the rapture of fight.

Then of all their thousands was none, as the long line surged to the war,

Might boast that his fleetfoot steeds outran Diomedes' car

Over the trench to bound, and to close in the fight with the foe ; 255

But far before all did he lay a Trojan warrior low,

Agelaus, Phradmon's son ; for he turned back his steeds in his fear,

But even as he wheeled them, plunged in his back Diomedes' spear

'Twixt shoulder and shoulder, and onward and out through his breast it crashed :

From the chariot he fell, and his armour above him clanged and clashed. 260

Then charged Agamemnon and Lord Menelaus, Atreus' sons,

Then charged the Aiantes twain, those battle-furious ones,

Idomeneus then, and Idomeneus' henchman Meriones,

The battle-peer of the manslaying War-god, charged with these.

Then the glorious son of Evaimon, Eurypylus, dashed on the foe ; 265

And on came Teucer, the ninth of them, straining his back-springing bow ;
And screened by Telamon's scion he stood, by Aias' shield.
Ever stealthily Aias withdrew it, and glancing across the field
The hero shot from his covert ; on whomso amidst of the host
Lighted his arrow, he fell, and he straightway gave up the ghost. 270
Then backward he stepped, and as cowereth a child to his mother, again
Unto Aias he shrank, and the bright shield hid that speeder of bane.

Whom smote he, Teucer the princely, first of the Trojan men ?
Orsilochus was it, and Ormenus next, Ophelestes then :
Lo, Daitor and Chromius are down, Lykophontes the godlike is dead, 275
Polyaimon's son Amopaon is slain, Melanippus is sped !
So one after other he bowed to the earth each stately head.
And Lord Agamemnon beheld, and rejoiced with exceeding joy
For the havoc his mighty bow dealt forth mid the ranks of Troy :
And he came and he stood by his side, and an eager word he spoke : 280

“ Teucer, belovèd, thou Telamon's son, war-captain of folk,
Shoot on : be a light of salvation to us, be a glory-star
Unto Telamon, him that fostered thine helpless years afar
In his palace, and scorned not thy birth, but in all love nurtured thee :
Now unto high renown exalt him, afar though he be. 285
For thus do I tell thee, and surely shall this my pledge be fulfilled—
If Zeus shall vouchsafe, if Athênè withal shall be gracious-willed,
That I smite yon Ilium, spoiling the goodly-built town,
First after myself will I give thee the guerdon of battle-renown,
A tripod, or horses twain, and the chariot therewithal, 290

Or a damsel to take to thy bed, a lovely war-won thrall."

Answered him Teucer the princely, and spake unto Atreus' son :
 " Most glorious Atreides, what hast thou to do to prick me on
 Who am battle-aflame myself ?—So long as abideth my might
 I cease not, but since toward Ilium backward we rolled the fight, 295
 Man after man from that hour have I marked : I have laid them low :
 Eight be the long-barbed arrows of death that have leapt from my bow :
 There is none but in flesh of a battle-swift warrior its rest hath found :
 But him can I nowise smite, yon murder-frenzied hound !"

Even as he spake it, he sped from the bowstring a shaft yet again 300
 Full against Hector—to smite him his soul was exceeding fain.
 But it missed him, howbeit a son of Priam, a princely wight,
 Gorgythion, he smote,—in the midst of his breast did the war-shaft light,—
 Whom a bride that from Aisumê-city was brought to the old king bare,
 Kastianeira the lovely, in form as a Goddess fair. 305
 And as boweth the crown of a poppy aside in a garden-bed,
 Overborne by the weight of its fruit and the rains from the spring-clouds shed,
 So, overweighed by his helmet, sideways drooped his head.

And Teucer thereafter shot from the bowstring a shaft yet again
 Full against Hector,—to smite him his soul was exceeding fain :— 310
 But behold, yet again hath he missed, for Apollo turned it aside :
 But Hector's charioteer, Archeptolemus peril-tried,
 As he rushed to the war, did the shaft on the breast by the nipple smite :
 Down from the car was he hurled, and the fleetfoot steeds in affright
 Swerved, and unstrung were his sinews, the life from his limbs took flight. 315

Then was Hector's soul for his charioteer overclouded with pain ;
Yet he left him to lie, though never so grieved for his war-fellow slain.
Now anigh him was Kebrionês, which was brother to him that was dead ;
And he bade him to take the reins, and he hearkened and did as he said.
From the lightning-gleaming car to the earth did Hector bound 320
With a terrible shout, and he snatched a rugged stone from the ground,
And he rushed upon Teucer,—to smite him his soul was exceeding fain.
From his quiver a bitter-keen shaft even then had the archer ta'en.
On the bowstring he laid it,—but Hector the splendour-morioned hurled. [325
And even as he drew back his arm, on the collar-bone crashed swift-whirled
That crag 'twixt the neck and the chest, and a deadly spot is the same ;
Even there, as he drew on his foeman, the rush of the rock-shard came.
Snapped was the bowstring, and palsy-numbed was his wrist by the blow,
And he sank to his knees, and dropped from his nerveless hands the bow.
But Aias forgat not his brother's plight, to the earth as he reeled, 330
But he ran and bestrode him, and cast round about him the fence of his shield.
And trusty war-fellows twain uplifted the stricken one,
For Alastor the godlike came with Mekisteus, Echius' son ;
And aback to the hollow galleys they bare him groaning sore.
And the Lord of Olympus enkindled the Trojans' might once more : 335
And they drave the Achaians over the deep-delved trench forthright ;
And charging afront of their battle went Hector exulting in might.
Even as a staunch hound holdeth a boar or a lion in chase,
And snaps evermore, as his swift feet follow in furious race,
At the flank or the haunch, keen-watching the beast's swift turnings aye, 340

So Hector pressed on the long-haired men of Achaia's array,
 Ever slaying the hindermost, as they fled all terror-aghast. [passed,
 But when through their palisade-fence and their trench in their flight they had
 And many an one of their host by the hands of the Trojans had died,
 Then by their galleys they halted, then were they fain to abide, 345
 Each calling on other, and lifting their hands to the Gods on high,
 Unto all the Deathless they cried with exceeding bitter cry,
 While this way and that way Hector was wheeling his steeds fair-maned,
 Glaring with eyes of the Gorgon or Arês the murder-stained.

And Hêrê the ivory-wristed beheld them pity-stirred : 350
 Straightway she cried to Athênê, and spake the swift-winged word :
 " Ha, daughter of Zeus the Aegis-lord, shall we no more heed
 How the Danaans perish in this the uttermost hour of their need ?
 Who must perish and fill up the cup of a doom of bitter pain
 By the onslaught of one ; for he rageth with fury that none may restrain, 355
 Hector the Priamid,—yea, he hath brought on them manifold bane."

Made answer Athênê, and stern were the steel-grey eyes and grim :
 " Would God this fellow might yield up the strength and the spirit of him,
 That the hands of the Argives here in his home his life might spill !
 But the heart of my father is mad, and its malice waxeth still,— 360
 The tyrant, the ever-unrighteous, the thwarter of all my will !
 Never he calleth to mind how many a time his son
 Was delivered by me when he fainted by toils of Eurystheus fordone.
 For his wont was to weep toward heaven, and Zeus at his helpless cry
 To deliver him out of his straits ever sent me down from the sky. 365

For had this but been known to the heart whose wisdom is come too late,
 What time unto Hades he sent him, the Warder of the Gate,
 To bring from the netherworld gloom dark Hades' loathly hound,
 From the cataract waters of Styx no way of escape had he found.
 But behold, he abhorreth me now, and the counsels of Thetis hath heard, 370
 Who hath kissed his knees, and hath lifted a suppliant hand to his beard,
 Beseeching Allfather to honour burg-waster Achilles her son.
 —Yet the day shall redawn when he calleth the Grey-eyed his darling one !
 Now yoke us thy thunderfoot horses, the tramlers of the sky,
 And into the palace of Zeus the Aegis-lord will I 375
 To gird me with harness of battle, and so shall I haply see
 If Hector the splendour-morioned, the child of Priam, with glee
 Will behold us twain, through the highways of war as we flash on his sight.
 Ha, many a Trojan shall banquet the vultures and dogs to-night
 With his fat and his flesh, by the galleys Achaian slain in the fight !” 380
 She spake, and the Goddess Hère the white-armed hearkened her rede ;
 And to harness the golden-frontleted horses hied her with speed
 Hère the Goddess, the Queen, great Kronos' glorious seed.
 But Athènè the child of the Aegis-wielder, the Lord of Thunder,
 Cast down on her father's threshold her mantle's woven wonder, 385
 The rainbow-broidered robe of her own hands' fashioning ;
 And she did on her body the tunic of Zeus the Cloudrack-king,
 And around her the harness of tear-drenched battle in haste did she fling.
 And her feet hath she set on the floor of the chariot that flameth as fire,
 And she graspeth her huge strong spear, for the Child of a Mighty Sire 390

Quelleth therewith whole ranks of the heroes that kindle her ire.
 Swiftly hath Hêrê uplifted the scourge, and the steeds doth she lash :
 Self-moving the gates of Heaven spring wide with a thunder-crash,
 Whose warders the Hours be, to whom is the charge of Olympus given
 To open or shut the rift in the cloud-built rampart of Heaven. 395
 On through the portal the steeds fair-heeding the goad have they driven.
 But Allfather from Ida beholding with terrible anger was stirred ;
 And he hasted Iris the golden-pinioned to bear his word :

“Speed thee, swift Iris, and turn them aback, and forbid them to rise
 Against me in defiance,—our strife shall be fought in terrible wise ! 400
 For this will I say, yea also will surely accomplish the same—
 While yet they whirl onward the chariot, their fleetfoot steeds will I maim,
 And will hurl from the car-seat the riders, and shatter the star-bright wain.
 And not in the compass of ten slow-wheeling years shall their pain
 Be assuaged, and the deep-scored traces be healed of the thunderbolt-scar ; 405
 That the Grey-eyed may know what she doeth defying her father in war.
 But not against Hêrê so much have I indignation or wrath,
 For, whatso I speak, evermore is she wont to cross my path.”

So spakê he, and storm-footed Iris arose to deliver his hest :
 To the heights of Olympus afar hath she flashed from Ida's crest. 410
 At the entering-in of the gate of Olympus the myriad-scarred
 She met them, and spake the behest of Zeus, and their path she barred :

“Whitherward rush ye ?—why are your proud hearts madness-driven ?
 Allfather forefendeth that help to the Danaan men be given.
 For this is his threat—yea, Kronos' son will accomplish the same :— 415

While yet they whirl onward the chariot, your fleetfoot steeds will he maim,
And will hurl from the car-seat the riders, and shatter the star-bright wain.
And not in the compass of ten slow-wheeling years shall your pain
Be assuaged, and the deep-scored traces be healed of the thunderbolt-scar ;
That the Grey-eyed may know what she doeth defying her father in war. 420
But not against Hèrè so much hath he indignation or wrath,
For, whatso he speaketh, ever her wont is to cross his path.
It is thou art the horrible thing, who hast nor shame nor fear,
If in truth thou wilt dare to upraise against Zeus thy mighty spear !”

So uttered the fleetfoot Iris her mes-age, and backward she sped : 425
Then to Athènè answered Hèrè the Queen, and she said :

“ Out on it, child of the Aegis-wielder !—it is not I
Will consent that we war against Zeus for the men that be born but to die.
Let this one utterly perish, let that live out his span,
As their lot is : and whatso Allfather decreeth of blessing or ban 430
To Troy and her foes—it is meet that he judge 'twixt man and man.”

So spake she, and backward she turned those thunderfoot horses again ;
And the Hours unyoked at her bidding the coursers of beautiful mane.
To the mangers ambrosia-heaped they tethered them, stabled in stall,
And the chariot leaned they against the shining forecourt-wall. 435
But the Goddesses twain sat down on their thrones of the fashioned gold
Amidst of the rest of the Gods, indignant and angry-souled.

But Zeus Allfather from Ida with chariot and steeds flew fast
To Olympus, and into the hall of the thronèd Gods he passed.
And the glorious Shaker of Earth unyoked the steeds for the King : 440

On its pavement the chariot he set, and thereover the cloths did he fling.
 And Zeus that speaketh in thunder went up to his golden seat,
 And mighty Olympus shuddered and rocked beneath his feet.
 But aloof from Kronion Athênê and Hêrê sat brooding alone :
 Nothing they spake to Allfather, question they asked of him none. 445
 But his spirit discerned their thoughts, and his scoff rang bitter-keen :
 " For what cause thus be ye vexèd, Athênê and Hêrê the Queen ?
 Of a surety ye be not forwearied with toil of triumphant fight,
 With destroying the Trojans, the folk that ye hate with ruthless spite !
 In any wise, such is my might, and mine hands that none may abide, 450
 That all the Gods in Olympus shall wrest not my purpose aside.
 But ye—ha, trembling came on the limbs of glorious mould
 Ere ye dared to look in on the battle, the fearful deeds to behold !
 For this will I tell ye, whose hands had accomplished my threat full well,
 Not on your chariot uplifted, O rebels that thunderbolts quell, 455
 Had ye won to Olympus again, to the home where the Deathless dwell."
 So spake he : Athênê and Hêrê in curbed wrath murmured low :
 Anigh to each other they sat, and they plotted the Trojans' woe.
 Now Athênê held her peace, and she answered him not a word,
 Yet against Allfather within her the tameless anger stirred. 460
 But the fury of Hêrê would nowise be pent in her breast, and she said :
 " What hast thou to do saying this, O Kronos' son most dread ?
 Well know we that this thy prowess may nowise be overborne :
 Yet for the sake of the Danaan heroes our spirits mourn,
 Who must perish and fill up the cup of a doom of bitter pain. 465

Howbeit, since this is thy bidding, from battle will we refrain :
 Yet will we put in the hearts of the Argives our counsel, that so
 They may perish not all in the hour when the fire of thy wrath is aglow."

Answered and spake to her Zeus, and the Cloudrack-herder cried :
 "Thou shalt see Kronion the prowess-triumphant with morning-tide 470
 —Ha, thou shalt see, an thou wilt, Queen Hêrê the lovely eyed !—
 Spreading ruin and wrack yet more through Achaia's war-host wide.
 For the warfare of Hector the battle-stormer shall nowise be done
 Or ever uprise by the galleys Peleus' fleetfoot son,
 In the day when they strive by the sterns in the desperate battle-strain, 475
 In the terrible stress of the struggle around Patroclus slain.
 For thus is it doom-forespoken. Nothing I reckon of thee
 In thy wrath, not though to the nethermost parts of the earth and the sea
 Thou descend, to the place where Iapetos sitteth, and Kronos withal,
 On whom Hyperion the Sun-god's gladdening beams ne'er fall, 480
 Never breezes refresh them, but Tartarus' pit is on every side :—
 Though thither thou wander, nothing I care for thine angry pride,
 For nothing that liveth is more unabashed than thou, I wot."
 So spake he, but Hêrê the ivory-wristed answered him not.

Then plunged in the Ocean-stream the sun's broad-flashing light 485
 Over the land corn-bounteous drawing the dark-palled night.
 Sore loth were the Trojans when sank his splendour, but unto their foes
 O welcome, O thrice-implored, the murky night uprose.

And Hector the glorious gathered the Trojans in council then :
 By the swirling river aloof from the galleys he mustered his men, 490

In a spot where the face of the earth showed clear, unpolluted with dead.
And they leapt to the ground from their chariots to hearken the word to be said
Of Hector the Zeus-beloved, and his spear in his hand he bore,
His lance of cubits eleven, and lightning leapt before
From the brazen head thereof, and the compassing ring of gold. 495
And he leaned thereupon, and his voice o'er the ranks of the Trojans rolled :
 " Hear me, ye Trojans and Dardans, and outland war-array.
I had looked to destroy yon galleys and all the Achaïans to-day :
And so unto Ilium the windy to turn in triumph again.
But the nightfall came too soon, which hath spared for a little from bane 500
Our foes and their ships hard down by the sea where the surf breaks white.
Now therefore we needs must yield to the high behest of the night,
And prepare us the meal of the even : unyoke the steeds fair-maned[sustained.
From the chariots, and cast them the food wherewithal shall their strength be
And bring ye forth of the city the goodly sheep and the kine 505
With such speed as ye may, and get you the soul-refreshing wine [take,
And the bread from your halls, and abundance of wood therewithal shall ye
To the end that the livelong night, till the Dawn from her mist-veil break,
We may burn full many a fire till the heavens shall be red with the glare,
Lest perchance in the night-tide the sons of Achaïa with long-flowing hair 510
Should rush to their galleys to flee from us over the broad-ridging seas.
But beware lest untroubled they get them aboard of their ships, or at ease.
Let many an one have a dart for his nursing at home to keep,
Smitten by shaft from the string, or a keen-whetted javelin's leap,
As he springs on his ship, that all other may loathe with shuddering fears 515

To bring on the horse-quelling Trojans the battle's blood and tears.
And let heralds proclaim through the city, and let the Zeus-loved say
That the stripling lads and the elders with temples hoary-grey
Shall camp on the God-built towers all round the leaguered wall.
And as for the women, let each of them kindle amidst of her hall 520
A mighty fire, and let all keep diligent watch and ward,
Lest an ambush enter the town while afar is her battle-guard.
Thus let it be, O heroes of Troy, as your captain hath cried ;
The rede that is good in this hour for our need, let it spoken abide,
And more will I say to the horse-quelling Trojans at morning-tide. 525
Unto Zeus and to all the Gods with a hopeful heart I pray
To chase these fate-driven dogs from our fatherland far away,
Whom the fates to their doom in the black ships drive in disarray.
Lo, thus will we guard us while over us pass the wings of the night :
We will gird us with harness of war with the first of the morning light, 530
And again by the hollow ships will we waken the keen-whetted fight.
I will know if Tydeus' son Diomedes the stalwart-grim
Shall thrust me aback from the ships to the walls, or I over him
Shall prevail with the brass, and shall win me his blood-stained battle-gear.
His manhood tomorn shall he know, if he dare to abide my spear 535
As onward it cometh :—nay, mid the first of the slain, I trow,
Stabbed shall he lie, with many a comrade around laid low,
When riseth the sun on the morrow. Would God I were even as sure
Deathless and ageless to live so long as the years endure,
And to be as Athênê honoured, or like to Apollo the King, 540

As the evil is sure that the day on the Argive host shall bring."

So Hector harangued them, and thundered the shouts of the Trojan folk.
 Then their horses areek with the sweat of the battle they loosed from the yoke ;
 And with thongs to the chariots tethered they every man his steed. [545
 Then brought they the fatling sheep and the kine from the city with speed ;
 And the wine that as honey is sweet to the soul did they bring for their need,
 And bread from their halls, and the faggots in heaps they laid thereby ;
 And victims unblemished they burnt to the deathless abiders on high,
 And the wind-waft lifted the sacrifice-reek* from the plain to the sky ;
 Sweet savour : but naught did the Deathless taste of the sacrifice, 550
 Neither would they, for sorely was Ilium the holy abhorred in their eyes,
 And Priam, and all the folk of the old king warfare-wise.

So there on the highways of battle with hearts uplifted they bode
 Sitting the livelong night where the countless watchfires glowed. [555
 And as when in the heaven the stars round the moon as she walketh in light
 Glitter and flash through the breathless hush of the air of the night,
 And out of the shadows the heights and the mountain-forelands start,
 And the glens, and the heaven's abysses unfathomed are rifted apart,
 And revealed are the uttermost star-hosts :—glad is the shepherd's heart ;
 So many the fires were that shone before Ilium 'twixt Xanthus' streams 560
 And the galleys, while ever the Troyfolk fed those wavering gleams.
 In the plain were there burning a thousand fires, and around each one
 Sat fifty men, and the glare of the flames on their faces shone.
 And the car-steeds champing the silvery barley and golden corn,
 There as they stood by the chariots, waited the fair-throned morn. 565

*Or, "lifted the roast-reek up," if 548 and 550—552 be rejected as spurious.

BOOK IX.

How in vain with their gifts they essayed to appease the wrath of Achilles.

SO were the Troyfolk keeping their watch ; but Achaia's array
Were holden of Panic, the handmaid of palsy-numbered Dismay ;
And their mightiest all were stricken with heart-overmastering pain.
And even as the fish-fraught sea is upstirred by the storm-winds twain,
The North-wind and West-wind, that forth of their lair in the Thrace-land
Swoop suddenly down, and all in a moment the surge dark-sweeping [leaping 5
Uptoseth its crests, and in heaps the sea-tangle is hurled to the shore,
Even so were the souls in the bosoms Achaian disquieted sore.

But Atreides, stricken at heart with the mighty grief of a king,
Went bidding the clear-voiced heralds to call to the council-ring 10
The heroes Achaian—but every man by his name should they call,
Nor in any wise shout, and himself therein toiled more than all.
So they gathered, and sat down troubled, and there Agamemnon stood
Fast shedding the tears, as a spring dark-watered poureth its flood
When bursteth its sunless stream from the cleft of a lone steep scour : 15

And heavily groaning he spake to the Argive chiefs of war :

“ Friends, lords of the Argives, and captains of fight, unto you I declare
Kronion hath tangled my feet in folly’s ruin-snare.

Ah cruel !—he promised me once, by his nod did he seal it withal,
That ere I returned I should cast down Ilium’s goodly wall. 20

He hath fed me on lying delusions !—lo, how he biddeth me fly
With shame unto Argos—me, who have led those thousands to die !
Yea, this strange thing is the pleasure of Zeus the almighty, I trow,
Who hath brought down many a city’s crown of pride full low,
And yet shall bring, for that none may withstand him, his doom to gainsay. 25
Come then, as my counsel shall be, even so let us all obey :

To our own dear fatherland-shore let us flee in the galleys away :—
We shall never hereafter win broad-wayed Troy-town for a prey.”

So spake he, and no man answered a word, but amazement-hushed
Long sat they in silence, the sons of Achaia, with hearts grief-crushed, 30
Till the word from the battle-helper, the lord Diomedes, burst :

“ Atreides, ’tis I will contend against this thy madness first
In council, O King, and thou shalt not be wroth, for that mine is the right.
Thou first in the midst of the Danaans spakest in scorn of my might :
Thou didst call me a battle-blender, a dastard—yea, thy jeers 35
Be known unto all the Argives, the young and the stricken in years !
Now the son of the God dark-counselled by halves hath dowered thee :
Above all men he gave to thee honour of sceptre-majesty,
But battle-prowess he gave not, the crown of the mightiest ones.
What, Sir, and tak’st thou upon thee to count Achaia’s sons 40

Dastards and battle-blenchers, according to that thy word ?
But if thine heart, thine, unto shameful home-return be stirred,
Go, for the way is before thee, thy galleys are hard by the sea :
There stand they, the host of the ships that came from Mycenæ with thee !
But the rest of the long-haired sons of Achaia shall yet stay on 45
Till we utterly waste Troy-town ;—yea, though all these would be gone,—
E'en let them flee in the ships to their own dear fatherland-home !—
Yet twain shall fight on, even I and Sthenelus, until the doom
Of Ilium's judgment be won, for in God's name now are we come."
Then from the sons of Achaia went up a mighty shout, 50
As they hailed Diomedes the horse-queller's rede unblenching stout.
Then Nestor arose, and spake that lord of the battle-car :
" O Tydeus' son, exceeding mighty thou art in war,
And counsel-peerless amidst of the heroes younger-born.
There is no man of all the Achaians shall hold thy rede in scorn, 55
Nor gainsay,—but the end of thy speech hath been left unspoken of thee.
Lo now, thou art even a youth ; thou mightest be son unto me,
Yea, even my youngest of all ; yet wise is thy counsel to-night
To the Argive kings, forasmuch as thy words be meet and right.
Come then, I am older than thou : from the thoughts that the years have stored
I will speak out ; every whit shall be said, and this my word [60
Shall no man set at naught, no, not Agamemnon our lord.
Tribeless and lawless is he, and a hearthless man accurst,
Whose heart for the strife that teareth the bowels of his land is athirst !
But now let us heed the behest of the dark-palled night on-sweeping, 65

And prepare us our supper : let watchmen withal for the host's safe-keeping
 Along by the deep-delved trench bestow them without the wall.
 Even this is my rede to the youths : but thereafter be thou unto all
 A leader, O Atreus' son, for that thou art the kingliest.
 Spread thou a feast for the princes, for this beseemeth thee best : 70
 Filled be thy tents with wine which the ships of Achaia's host
 Bring over the broad sun-flashing waters from Thracia's coast.
 All guest-receiving is thine, seeing many be under thy sway :
 And when many in council be met, thou shalt do as that man shall say
 Whose rede is the wisest : sore is the war-host's need, I trow, 75
 Of counsel valiant and prudent, for hard by our galleys the foe
 Be burning their countless fires,—what heart for this would joy ?
 This night, even this, shall deliver the host from bane, or destroy."

So spake he, the ancient of days, and they hearkened with heed and obeyed ;
 And forth of the camp went speeding the watchmen harness-arrayed : 80
 With Nestor's son, Thrasymêdes, shepherd of folk, did they speed,
 With Askalaphus others fared, and Ialmenus Arês' seed,
 With Aphareus, Mêriones, and Dêrpyrus some be gone,
 And other with Kreion's child, Lykomêdes the mighty one.
 Seven were the captains of watchmen, and each man's warder-band 85
 Was a hundred warriors, each with his long lance gripped in his hand.
 So they hied them, and sat them down in the midst 'twixt trench and wall,
 And they kindled a fire, and prepared them the meal of the evenfall.

But the counsel-chiefs of Achaia's host Atreides led
 Unto his tent, and before them a plenteous feast he spread. 90

So they put forth their hands to eat of the meats on the board that lay.
But so soon as the craving for meat and for drink was done away,
For the weaving of counsel-weft did the ancient king uprise,
Nestor, whose rede in the days overpast seemed best in their eyes.
And he lifted his voice in their midst, and with kindly intent he spoke : 95

“ Most glorious Atreus' son, Agamemnon lord of folk,
With thee will I end, and with thee will begin, for of many a land
Thou rulest the sons, and Zeus hath committed into thine hand
The sceptre and laws of a king, that thine heart may be careful for all :
Wherefore 'tis meet that thou speak, it is meet that thou hearken withal, 100
Yea, that thou bring to pass whatsoever excellent thought
Hath birth in another man's soul :—it is thine, whatsoe'er shall be wrought.
Lo, now will I utter the thing that seemeth the best in mine eyes,
For better counsel than this shall no man's heart devise,
Than the thought that hath lain in my soul from the days overpast until now, 105
Even from the hour when in anger, O Zeus-begotten, thou
Didst go and didst bear from the tent of Achilles Briseïs the maid—
Not in any wise after my mind, for with earnest words I essayed
To turn thee therefrom, but thou, overborne by thy mood high-souled,
Didst dishonour a man most mighty, whom even the Deathless hold 110
In honour : his guerdon thou tookest and keepest : yet let us to-day,
Even now, take counsel, if haply his wrath may be charmed away
By the gifts that our hands shall bring, by the love that our lips shall say.”

Answered and spake unto him Agamemnon the King again :
“ Old sire, not false is the tale thou hast told of my madness-bane. 115

Fool-furious I was, I deny not :—better, I see it, is he
Whom Zeus holdeth dear to his heart than a great war-company,
As now he hath favoured Achilles, and smitten Achaia's array.
But since in the hour of my bane my infatuate heart bare sway,
Fain would I win back his love with a recompense-price untold. 120
Lo, the tale of the glorious gifts in the midst of you all I unfold :—
Seven tripods that never were sullied of fire, ten talents of gold,
And flame-bright caldrons a score, and twelve steeds goodly to see,
Guerdon-winners whose hoofs beat music of victory.
No lackland wight were the man, neither scant were the treasure that shone 125
In his halls gold-gleaming, who called such guerdon-wealth his own
As the speed of my thunderfoot steeds for me in the race hath won.
Seven women withal will I give him, in fair work cunning to toil,
Lesbians, the which, when himself took Lesbos-town for a spoil,
I chose me ; in beauty above all women-folk peerless were they ; 130
These will I give him : with them shall be she that I reft away,
Briséis : thereto will I swear a mighty oath and dread
That never for love's embracing I gat me unto her bed,
As the children of men be wont, when man and maiden wed.
All these will I give forthright ; and if Priam's mighty wall 135
By the grace of the Gods hereafter beneath our hands shall fall,
Let him come when the host is dividing the spoil in the triumphing day,
And heap up his galley with gold as he will and with brass of the prey.
Yea, twenty daughters of Troy let him choose, of all that therein
Be fairest next unto Helen the peerless Argive Queen. 140

And when Argos, the choice of the land of Achaia, again shall be won,
 He shall wed with my child ; I will honour him even as Orestes my son,
 The lad that in stintless abundance is nurtured royally.
 Behold three daughters have I in my fair-built halls oversea,
 Chrysothemis, Laodikê, and Iphianassa withal : 145
 Whichso he will let him lead for his bride unto Peleus' hall,
 Neither pay me the bride-price : yea, and a dower of mine hand shall she have,
 Such treasure as never a father yet with his daughter gave.
 Seven cities to wit will I give him, stately and fair to be seen,
 Kardamylê, Enopê, Hirê, with pastures ever green, 150
 Pherae the hallowed, Antheia deep-meadowed on every hand,
 Aipeia the lovely-lying, and Pedasus' vine-gladdened land,
 All nigh to the sea, on the borders of Pylos the city of sand.
 Sheep-flocks enow have the burghers thereof, and herds of kine,
 And with gifts, as men worship a God, shall they render him honour divine, 155
 And shall bring rich tribute, bowing them under his sceptred sway.
 All this will I surely fulfil if he turn from his anger away.
 Let him yield : unrelenting is none nor unyielding save Hades, I wis ;
 Wherefore most hateful of Gods to the children of men he is.
 Yea, let him give place unto me as a king, for that higher than he 160
 Am I set, and as yieldeth the young to the old let him yield unto me."
 Made answer Gerenia's horseman, and Nestor the ancient spoke :
 " Atreides the high-renowned, Agamemnon lord of folk,
 The gifts thou wouldst give to Achilles the King no man may contemn.
 Come then, let us take to us chosen men, let us hasten them 165

To go to the tent of Achilles Peleus' son straightway.
Now whomso I choose for our helping, he shall not say us nay :—
Foremost of all let Phoinix the Zeus-belovéd lead,
And with him shall be Aias the giant, and godlike Odysseus, to plead ;
And let Odios with these, and Eurybates, thither as heralds fare. 170
Now bring for our hands the water, proclaim ye the hush for our prayer,
To the end we may cry unto Zeus, if perchance he will pity and spare."
So spake he, and good in the eyes of them all was the ancient's word.
And the heralds brought them water, and over their hands they poured ;
And the mixing bowls by the boys with the banquet-wine were crowned, 175
And to all, from the right to the left, they filled the goblets round.
So when they had poured the libation, and drunk to their hearts' content,
Forth of the tent of Atreus' son Agamemnon they went.
But still did Gerenia's horseman charge them with diligent heed,
Ever laying on this one and that, but most on Odysseus, his rede, 180
How they should strive to prevail with Peleus' noble seed.
By the thunderous-plunging sea they paced the sighing sands
With many a prayer to the Earth-shaking King, the Girder of Lands,
That lightly the mighty spirit might yield of Aiakus' son.
So when to the tents and the ships of the Myrmidon host they won, 185
They found him delighting his soul as rang to the sweep of his hand
His beautiful rich-wrought lyre with a silver cross-bar spanned,
Which he chose from the spoils of the war when he smote Eëtion's town.
Sweetly it rang as he sang old deeds of hero-renown.
And overagainst him Patroclus sat, and he held his peace, 190

Spell-bound till the glorious lay of Aiakus' son should cease.
 So drew they anigh him, and foremost Odysseus the godlike went,
 And before him they stood, and sprang to his feet in astonishment
 Achilles, yet holding the lyre in his hand as he left his seat ;
 Therewithal did Patroclus, beholding the heroes, uprise to his feet. 195
 Then greeted them well fleet-footed Achilles, and thus spake he :
 " All hail !—ye be friends—good sooth there is need that such should be !—
 Who, for all my wrath, of the host of Achaia be dearest to me."
 Then strode he, Achilles the godlike, before, to his tent as they hied ;
 And he caused them to rest upon couches and bright rugs purple-dyed, 200
 And he spake forthright to Patroclus, while yet he abode at his side :
 " A bowl yet greater, O son of Menoitius, set thou up :
 Let the wine be stronger-mingled, and deal unto each man a cup ;
 For the dearest of men this night beneath my pavilion shall sup."
 He spake, and Patroclus hearkened to do his friend's desire. 205
 Down flung he a mighty fleshing-block in the light of the fire ;
 Thereon hath he laid the backs of a fatling goat and a sheep,
 And a huge boar's chine, with the fat's abundant fold clothed deep.
 Then Automedon held, and Achilles the godlike carved the meats,
 And deftly he cut them in pieces, and set the same on the spits. 210
 Then a mighty flame did the godlike son of Menoitius raise.
 And so soon as the fire burned low, and abated the leaping blaze,
 The red-glowing embers he levelled, and stretched the spits thereover,
 On the spit-racks laid, and with sprinkling of holy salt did he cover.
 So when he had roasted the flesh, and into the chargers had poured, 215

Patroclus took of the bread, and he dealt it about the board
In beautiful maunds, and Achilles portioned the meats unto all.
Then, facing Odysseus the godlike, against the further wall
Sat hero Achilles, and spake to Patroclus his comrade true
To sacrifice, and he cast on the fire the high Gods' due. 220
So they put forth their hands to eat of the meats on the board that lay.
But so soon as the craving for meat and for drink had been done away,
Then Aias to Phoinix nodded : Odysseus marked that sign,
And he filled up a goblet, and pledged Achilles the King in the wine :
 " All hail unto thee, Achilles : the banquet's abundant cheer 225
We lack not in Atreus' son Agamemnon's tent, nor here ;
For with stintless dainties ever the feastful board is dight.
But not for the pleasant banquet our hearts are careful to-night.
But we look on affliction exceeding heavy, O fostered of Zeus,
And we fear, and we know not whether we yet shall save or lose 230
The fair-benched galleys, except thou clothe thee with battle-might :
For anigh to the ships and the compassing rampart the camp is pight
Of the Trojans lofty-souled and their far-famed battle-aid.
They have kindled their countless watch-fires, they deem they shall not be stayed
Till down on the dark-hulled galleys in onset triumphant they dash. 235
And Zeus Kronion is showing them signs by his levin-flash
To rightward, and Hector is storming with battle-rage high-wrought
In horrible madness : he trusteth in Zeus, and he careth naught
Or for men or for Gods ; overmastering frenzy hath seized upon him.
And he prayeth that dawn may shine with speed on the earth-ways dim ; 240

For he sweareth to hew from the galleys the ensign-crests of the same,
 And he sweareth to burn their hulls with ruthless-ravening flame,
 And amidst them to slay the Achaïans as 'wildered they gasp mid the smoke.
 Sorely afraid in my spirit am I lest the threats that he spoke
 May yet be fulfilled of the Gods, and our weird at the last may be 245
 To perish in Troy far off from Argos the horse-fed lea.
 Up then, if thy will be to save Achaïa's fainting sons,
 Though late, from the onset-thunder of Troyland's mighty ones.
 Thyself shalt have anguish of ruth thereafter : no help is at all,
 Neither healing, for mischief done. But long ere such befall, 250
 O bethink thee to turn from the Danaans ruin's evil day !
 O friend, thou wast charged of thy sire—ah, surely did Peleus say,
 In the hour when he sent thee from Phthia for King Agamemnon to fight,
 'My son, Athênê and Hêrê shall give thee battle-night,
 If such be their pleasure, but be it for thee to rein in thy breast 255
 Thy mood high-hearted, for verily lovingkindness is best,
 And refrain thee from strife, from the worker of bane, and the Argives shall raise
 The higher thy name and thy fame, both the young and the ancient of days.'
 So charged thee the old man, but ah, thou forgettest : yet fling from thee, fling,
 Even now, heart-cankering anger. Lo, Agamemnon the King 260
 Maketh proffer of worthy gifts, if thou turn from thine anger away.
 Prithee hearken to me, I will set forth all that goodly array
 Of the peace-gifts promised to thee in the tent of the King of Men :—
 Seven tripods unsullied of fire, and talents of red gold ten,
 And flame-bright caldrons a score, and twelve steeds stately to see, 265

Guerdon-winners whose hoofs beat music of victory.
 No lackland wight were the man, neither scant were the treasures that shone
 In his halls gold-gleaming, who called such guerdon-wealth his own
 As the speed of the thunderfoot steeds of the King in the races hath won.
 Seven women withal will he give thee, in fair work cunning to toil, 270
 Lesbians, the which, when thyself tookest Lesbos-town for a spoil,
 He chose him ; in beauty above all womenfolk peerless were they.
 These will he give thee : with them shall be she that he reft away,
 Brisêts : thereto will he swear a mighty oath and dread
 That never for love's embracing he gat him unto her bed, 275
 As the loving be wont, O King, when man and maiden wed.
 All these shall be thine forthright ; and if Priam's mighty wall
 By the grace of the Gods hereafter beneath our hands shall fall,
 Come thou when the host is dividing the spoil in the triumphing day,
 And heap up thy galley with gold as thou wilt and with brass of the prey. 280
 Yea, twenty daughters of Troy shalt thou choose thee, of all that therein
 Be fairest next unto Helen the peerless Argive Queen.
 And when Argos, the choice of the land of Achaia, again shall be won,
 Thou shalt wed with his child, he will honour thee even as Orestes his son,
 The lad that in stintless abundance is nurtured royally. 285
 Behold, three daughters he hath in his fair-built halls oversea,
 Chrysothemis, Laodikê, and Iphianassa withal :
 Whichso thou wilt shalt thou lead for thy bride unto Peleus' hall,
 Neither pay him the bride-price : yea, and a dower of his hand shall she have,
 Such treasure as never a father yet with his daughter gave. 290

Seven cities to wit will he give thee, stately and fair to be seen,
 Kardamylé, Enopê, Hirè with pastures ever green,
 Pherae the hallowed, Antheia deep-meadowed on every hand,
 Aipeia the lovely-lying, and Pedasus' vine-gladdened land,
 All nigh to the sea, on the borders of Pylos the city of sand. 295
 Sheep-flocks enow have the burghers thereof, and herds of kine ;
 And with gifts, as men worship a God, shall they render thee honour divine,
 And shall bring rich tribute, bowing them under thy sceptred sway.
 All this will he surely fulfil if thou turn from thine anger away.
 But if Atreus' son be utterly loathed of thy soul this day, 300
 Even he and his gifts, yet pity the rest of Achaia's array,
 Which be fainting throughout the host : as a God's shall they honour thy name,
 For of these shalt thou win of a truth exceeding glorious fame.
 Even Hector thou now couldest slay : he would draw full nigh unto thee.
 He is filled with baleful madness, he deemeth that none such as he 305
 Is found mid the Danaan men whom the galleys bare oversea."
 Made answer Achilles to him, and the fleetfoot hero replied :
 " O scion of Zeus and Laertes, Odysseus in wiles deep-tried,
 Clear-spoken this word of mine answer must be, and I may not feign ; [310
 I must tell you the thought of my soul and the thing that shall surely remain,
 Lest ye tarry and tarry with fawning words to tempt me in vain.
 For hateful to me is the man as the very gates of Death
 Who hideth a thing in his heart that is not as the thing that he saith.
 But for me, I will utter the thing that I deem shall be best in the end :—
 Not me shall the son of Atreus, the King Agamemnon, bend, 315

Nor the rest of the Danaan men : for a thankless toil hath it been
 To grapple with foes evermore in the battle sleepless-keen.
 One share hath the home-abider, and he that hath fought with his might :
 In the selfsame honour the dastard is held, and the valiant in fight :
 And how dieth the deedless man ?—as the deed-crowned heroes die. 320
 Of my travail and all my vexation of spirit no profit have I :
 Naught boots it that ever in battle I set my life at stake.
 And even as a bird to her callow nestling brood doth take
 Each morsel she winneth, the while herself is in sorriest plight,
 Even so was I wont to watch through many a sleepless night, 325
 And I bore the brunt of the battle of many a bloody day,
 Warring with men with intent to win their wives for a prey.
 Twelve fenced cities of men in sea-raid I took for a spoil,
 Yea, and by land eleven on Troyland's deep-loamed soil ;
 And out of them all did I gather their treasures many and brave, 330
 And to Atreus' son Agamemnon I bare them all and gave.
 And he, he tarried behind by the sea-swift ships of the host,
 And received them : a few did he portion to others ; he kept the most.
 Other guerdons of honour he wont to give unto captain and king,
 And they keep them, but me alone of Achaia's gathering 335
 Hath he robbed, he hath gotten my heart's delight :—let him take his joy
 In her arms ! But why must the Argives fight with the sons of Troy ?
 Why gathered Atreides the host and led them on this war-quest ?
 Was it not for the winning of Helen the Queen, the beautiful-tressed ?
 What then, amongst menfolk shall none save Atreus' sons be found 340

That love their wives?—tush, whoso is good and whose heart is sound
 Loveth his own, and he cherisheth, even as I held dear,
 Dear from my heart, this maid, what though she were spoil of my spear.
 Now since he hath torn from mine hands my prize, and deceived me herein,
 No more let him tempt me—I know him : my trust shall he never win. 345
 But let him, Odysseus, with thee and the kings that will trust the liar,
 Take counsel how to deliver the ships from the foemen's fire.
 Good sooth, he hath fashioned full many a deed without mine aid.
 O yea, he hath built him a wall, and a trench thereby hath he made ;
 Wide is it and deep, and therein is the fence of his stakes arrayed. 350
 Yet the might of the manslaying Hector not even so hath he stayed.
 Howbeit while yet with the host of Achaia I fared to the war,
 Never dared Hector his battle array from the wall afar.
 No farther he came than the Skaian gate and the oak thereby.
 There once he abode me, and scarce from mine onset alive did he fly. 355
 But now, since my will is to fight not with Hector the godlike again,
 Tomorn unto Zeus and the rest of the Gods will I sacrifice ; then
 I will run my galleys asca, and with goodly freight will I stow ;
 Thou shalt see, if thou wilt, if thou carest for suchlike gallant show,
 Right early my ships o'er the fish-fraught Hellespont sailing away, 360
 And my comrades therein, full fain of the dashing oar's swift play.
 And if fair-breathed winds be vouchsafed of the Shaker of the Land,
 On the third day hence shall I win unto deep-loamed Phthia's strand.
 Much wealth have I there, which I left when on this ill quest I came ;
 Fine gold moreover from hence, and the copper's ruddy flame, 365

And fair-girt women, and hoary steel, will I bear oversea,
Yea, all that by lot was mine : but the prize that he gave unto me
Lord Agamemnon from me like a tyrant hath taken away,
Even Atreus' son. Now therefore proclaim all this that I say—
Openly tell it, that all may be indignation-stirred, 370
If he hopeth to cheat any Danaan yet with deceitful word,
Who is ever with impudence clad : yet he will not dare, I wis,
Dog-shameless albeit he be, to look in my face after this.
I will frame not with him war-counsel, nor fashion the deeds of war.
He hath wholly deceived me, and played the villain, and me never more 375
With words shall he cozen : suffice him the past : in peace let him go
To his ruin : the Counsel-father hath stolen his wits, I trow.
Hateful to me are his gifts, and I hold him at one straw's fee.
Not though he would give ten, twenty-fold so much unto me [hand, 380
As the wealth that he hath, and the wealth that may come otherwhence to his
Not all that Orchomenus gathers, nor Thebes in Egypt-land,
The city that hath in the halls of her palaces treasure untold,—
She hath gates five-score, and through every gate of the war-fenced hold
March forth five hundred men with the steed and the battle-car,—
Though his gifts were in number as sands of the sea or as dust-motes are, 385
Not even so Agamemnon should bend my purpose again
Till he pay me the uttermost price of my grievous honour-stain.
With a daughter of Atreus' son Agamemnon I wed not, I,
Though with Aphroditê the Golden in beauty his child should vie,
And in cunning work of the loom with Athênê the flashing-eyed. 390

Not I—let him choose him another Achaian lord for the bride,
Ay, let one worthy to mate her, a kinglier wooer, come !
If the Gods shall preserve me in life, if again I shall win to mine home,
Peleus himself thereafter shall find out a wife for his son.
In Hellas and Phthia be maidens Achaian many an one, 395
Daughters of princes the champion-warders of tower and wall.
For my dear-loved wife will I take whichsoever I will of them all.
There many a time and oft of my princely heart was I moved
To woo me and win me a bride, a true wife meet to be loved,
And to take my joy of the wealth by the old man Peleus stored ; 400
For as nothing-worth in the balance with life I account that hoard
That in Ilium lay, in the fair-built city, as telleth the tale,
In the days of peace, ere came Achaia's sons for her bale.
Neither all that the rock-hewn threshold of Phoebus Apollo doth keep
In the fane of the Archer-god, on Pytho's craggy steep. 405
For kine may ye get you in foray, and flocks of goodly sheep ;
There be tripods to win, and the bright-maned war-steed's gallant head :
But neither by foray nor price returneth the life to the dead,
When once through the fence of the teeth the soul of a man hath fled.
For my mother the Goddess Thetis the silver-footed saith 410
That of twofold fates am I onward thrust to the bourne of death.
If here I abide and battle to win the Trojans' town,
Lost is mine home-return, but unfading is my renown.
But and if to mine own dear country I hie me, to Phthia's strand,
Lost is my fair renown, but my days shall be long in the land, 415

And it shall not be soon that my feet at the goal of death shall stand.
 Yea, to the rest of the host withal would I utter my rede,
 That homeward ye sail, for your expectation never shall speed,
 That Ilium the steep should be won, for that far-seeing Zeus stretcheth out
 His hand for her shield, and the hearts of her folk be uplifted and stout. 420
 But ye to the lords of the host of Achaia go and declare
 My message,—for this is the office that ambassage-elders bear,—
 To devise in their hearts new counsel, and find them a better way,
 Such as shall save them their ships and the lives of Achaia's array
 By the hollow ships, forasmuch as this hath availed them naught 425
 Which of late they devised, for the flame of mine anger their ruin hath wrought.
 But here let Phoinix abide, let him lie in my tent this night,
 And so to our fatherland-home shall he sail with the morning's light,
 If such be his will, but I bear him not hence in his own despite."
 So did he speak, and in silence hushed were they all as they heard, 430
 Aghast at his speech, for he cried an exceeding vehement word.
 But at last made answer Phoinix the chariot-champion hoar,
 Sudden-weeping, for trembled his heart for the sons of Achaia sore :
 " O glorious Achilles, if this be thy very soul's desire
 To return, if thou wilt not in any wise save from the ravening fire 435
 The sea-swift ships, for the fierceness of wrath that hath entered thine heart,
 How dare I be left alone, my son, if thou wilt depart ?
 For with thee was I sent of the car-borne Peleus the hoary-grey
 In the hour when from Phthia to King Agamemnon he sent thee away,
 When thou wert but a child, in the shock of the battle untried as yet, 440

Or the council-ring, where the wise amid princes on high be set.
Wherefore he sent me forth for to teach thee all this lore,
To make thee a prince in counsel, a doer of deeds of war.
Therefore, my son, my beloved, to tarry forlorn of thee
Could I nowise endure, nay, not though a God would pledge him to me 445
To strip me of eld, and to clothe me with youth-tide's goodlihead,
As I was when at first from Hellas the land of the lovely I fled
From the storm of the anger of Ormenus' son, of Amyntor my sire,
When because of his leman the beautiful-tressed I had kindled his ire.
For he loved her himself, and his true-wed wife did he set at naught 450
Even my mother ; and me evermore by my knees she besought
To go in to her first, that his leman might loathe him, the hoary-old.
So I hearkened and did, and the tale ere long to my father was told ;
And he bitterly cursed me, and loud to the hateful Avengers he prayed
That never upon his knees might prattling babe be laid 455
Begotten of me, and the Gods fulfilled that curse on my head,
Even Zeus of the Underworld, and Persephonē's majesty dread.
Yea, and I purposed to slay him for this with the keen-whetted spear :
But one of the Deathless assuaged my fury, and put me in fear
Of the speech of a people indignant, a nation's mocking breath, 460
Lest Achaia should call me the man blood-stained with a father's death.
But the fire in mine heart burned ever, my spirit would nowise be won
In an angry father's halls hate-haunted to linger on.
But my friends sore-pleading around me came, and the men of my kin :
So these constrained me to bide for a space those halls within. 465

And goodly sheep full many, and trailfoot wreath-horned kine
Did they slay, and the fat-enfolded carcase of many a swine
Stretched they for the singeing athwart the Fire-god's fervent glow ;
And out of the old man's jars did the wine in abundance flow.
So for nine nights' space round about me, all through the livelong night, 470
Changing about did they watch me, and never was quenched the light
Of the fires : 'neath the colonnade of the fenced court blazed one ;
In the porchway in front of the doors of my chamber another shone.
But it came to pass, when the tenth in blackness of darkness fell,
That I burst the doors of my chamber, massy and bolt-gripped well, 475
And I passed forth thence, and I leapt the fence of the courtyard wall
Lightly ; was none that beheld me, nor watcher nor handmaid thrall ;
And fleeing afar o'er the wide-spreading lawnlands of Hellas I roamed
Till I came to the mother of sheep, unto Phthia's soil deep-loamed,
Unto Peleus the king ; and he welcomed the stranger with kindly cheer ; 480
And he loved me like as a father holdeth his own son dear,
His darling, his only-begotten, the heir to his wealth and his land ;
And he made me rich, and he gave much people into mine hand.
So I, the Dolopians' king, on the marches of Phthia abode.
And I reared thee to this thy greatness, Achilles like to a God. 485
From my soul did I love thee, for thou with none other save only with me
Wouldst sit at thy meat in the halls, or go to the banquet's glee.
Ay, naught would content thee but Phoinix' knees for thy banqueting seat,
And his hand to put to thy lips the wine and the savoury meat.
And often the breast of my tunic was drenched and stain-defiled, 490

As suddenly spirted the wine from the helpless lips of the child.
So bare I the burden of travail and toil for my darling's need,
Bethinking me how that the Gods had vouchsafed unto me no seed
Of my body : but thee, Achilles, O godlike fair and strong,
I accounted my son, my defender thereafter from shame and wrong. 495
Nay, Achilles, do thou overmaster thy pride : thou oughtest not, thou,
To cherish a ruthless spirit : the very Gods can bow,—
Though more excellent majesty, mightier honour and strength, be theirs,—
Even these by the incense upwafted, by wrath-assuaging prayers,
By libation and sacrifice-reek do men unto mercy win, 500
Whoso shall make supplication because of transgression and sin.
For Prayers be the daughters of Him of the majesty-crownèd head ;
Halt are they and wrinkled, with eyes ever glancing askance as in dread,
And aye in the steps of Sin do they follow with heedful tread.
But mighty and fleetfoot is Sin, whereby she outrunneth them all 505
By far, and through all the earth she causeth to stumble and fall
The children of men, and the Prayers follow after with balm for their bruise.
Whosoe'er in the day of their coming revereth the daughters of Zeus,
Greatly they bless him, and hearken when he in his need shall pray.
But if any deny their petition, and stubbornly say them nay, 510
Then go they and cry to Kronion that Sin may meet that one
In the way, that he stumble and fall, and atone for the wrong he hath done.
O then to the Daughters of Zeus, Achilles, render thou
The homage that causeth the hearts of the noblest of earth to bow !
If Atreides had offered not gifts, neither spoken of others in store, 515

But in malice and wrath hot-burning continued evermore,
 It is not I that would bid thee to cast thine anger from thee,
 And stand up for the Argives' help, whatsoever their need might be.
 But he giveth thee much forthright, and more remaineth behind,
 And to plead with thee hath he sent the princeliest men he may find 520
 In Achaia's host, the men that of all the Argive array
 Be dearest to thee ; then spurn not thou their petition away,
 Nor their feet : howbeit ere this could none on thy wrath cry shame.
 Even so have we heard the story of heroes of olden fame ;
 For they bare them as thou, when swelled the stormy anger-tide ; 525
 Yet might they by presents be won, and by pleadings be pacified.
 I mind me of deeds overpast, of a tale of the times of old,
 How it befell : in the midst of you all now let it be told.
 The Kurêtes and battle-biding men of Aetolia warred
 For Kalydon's sake, and many a hero was slain by the sword, 530
 While fought Aetolia's sons to deliver that lovely town,
 While warred the Kurêtes to cast it battle-wasted down.
 For Artemis golden-throned with her plague had smitten them sore
 In her anger that Oineus had rendered her naught of his harvest-store ;
 But to all the rest of the Gods was the hecatomb-banquet brought, 535
 To the daughter of Zeus most high alone he sacrificed not,
 Forgetting, or heedless perchance—his spirit was folly-distraught.
 And for this cause wroth was the Arrow-triumphant, the seed divine ;
 And she sent her avenger, a white-tushed boar, a monster of swine,
 Which made havoc of Oineus' land, of the promise of corn and wine : 540

And many a stately orchard-tree did the monster uproot,
And low on the ground he cast their blossomed hope of fruit.
But of Oineus' son Meleager that terror of earth was slain,
For from many a city he gathered him hunters slaughter-fain,
And hounds : for the hands of a few might nowise lay him low, 545
So huge was the beast, and many he sped to the pyres of woe.
Then Artemis stirred up strife for his sake and battle-broil,
For the sake of the wild boar's head and the great hide's shaggy spoil,
Between the Kurêtes and sons of Aetolia mighty of heart.
Now while Arès-beloved Meleager in battle played his part, 550
So long the Kurêtes were hardly bestead, and they did not dare
To abide him without their rampart, for all that so many they were.
But when anger gat hold on the hero, such as is wont to rise
In the bosoms of others, albeit in spirit never so wise,
Then it was so, that wrathful at heart with his mother, Althaia's son 555
Lay by his wedded wife, Kleopatra the lovely one,
The child of Marpessa, Evênus' daughter of ankles slim,
And of Idas :—in might no earth-abider was like unto him
In the days of old—yea, he grasped for the battle his bow, and defied
Phoebus Apollo the King, for the lovely-ankled bride. 560
But the child Kleopatra was called by another name beside
In the halls of her father and mother—'our Halkyonè !' they cried,
For that like to the woe-stricken halcyon so did her mother mourn
When of Phoebus Far-darter Apollo from Idas' arms she was torn.
By her side, on the heart-stinging rage of his soul heavy-brooding, he lay, 565

Wroth for the curse of his mother, who cried to the Gods in the day
 Of her anguish of soul for the death of her brother, and moaned her request,
 Wild-beating with passionate hands on the earth's all-fostering breast,
 Shrieking on Hades, and crying in dread Persephoné's ears, [570
 On her knees as she grovelled, and wet grew the folds of her bosom with tears,
 That her son might be given to death ; and Erinnys from Erebus heard,
 The demon that walketh in darkness, the heart with relenting unstirred.
 But now at their gates was there clamour of onset, the stones crashed loud
 As they hailed on the towers : and to him Aetolia's elders bowed, † to rise 575
 And the chief of the priests of the Gods did they send, and they prayed him
 And defend them, yea, and they pledged them to give to him gifts of price,
 Even the fat of the land of Kalydon's lovely plain ;
 There bade they the hero choose him a passing-fair domain
 Of fifty acres,—the half was the slope of the vine-clad hill,
 And the half was the treeless tilthland, to cut from the plain at his will. 580
 And Oineus the ancient, the war-steed-smiter, besought him sore,
 As he stood on the threshold-stone of his high-built chamber door,
 Shaking the leaves thereof, and bowing a suppliant knee ;
 And his mother the Queen and his sisters besought him earnestly.
 But he hardened his heart yet more : then prayed him the true and tried, 585
 His war-fellows trusty and dear beyond all others beside.
 But for all this would not the wrath of his spirit be turned away,
 Till the slingstones battered his very chamber, the Kurete array
 Swarmed over the towers, and they set them to burn that mighty town.
 Then at the feet of the hero his fair-robed wife fell down, 590

And with weeping besought him, and put him in mind of all the woes,
The horrors that light on a folk whose city is ta'en of their foes,
When they slaughter the men, when the burg is wasted with ravening flame,
When strangers are haling young children to thralldom, fair women to shame.
And his spirit was kindled within him to hear that evil tale, 595
And he gat him up, and arrayed his body in sunbright mail.
So did he shield the Aetolian folk from the day of their bale,
When melted his wrath into ruth ; yet never the gifts they gave,
So many and fair ; yet even the thankless ones did he save.
But be not thou thus-minded : may no overmastering fate 600
Thitherward turn thee, beloved : late shall it be, o'erlate,
When the ships are aflame, to deliver them : come for the gifts' sake then,
For even as a God shall they honour thee, all the Achaian men.
But and if without gift-atonement thou enter the murderous fight,
Less shall thine honour be then, though quelled be the war by thy might." 605
Then to the ancient Achilles the fleetfoot made reply :
" Grey father Phoinix, thou fostered of Zeus, I need not, I,
Such honour,—I have been honoured by doom of Zeus's will ;
And this shall abide upon me beside the swift ships still,
While stirreth the breath in my breast, and my limbs may play their part. 610
This thing will I tell thee moreover, and thou lay it up in thine heart :
Trouble not thou my soul with lamenting and mourning and woe,
Showing kindness to Atreus' son : it beseemeth not thee, I trow,
To love him, lest thou be hated of him that loveth thee.
It were best that with me thou vex whosoever vexeth me. 615

Share kingship with me, and the half of my worship and my renown :
 And the tidings shall these bear back ; but abide thou here, lie down
 On a couch soft-spread, and so soon as the rose-flushed Dawn shall appear
 Will we take thought to return to our own, or to tarry here."

He spake, and he bent his brows to Patroclus silently 620
 To spread for Phoinix the thick-strewn couch, that the others thereby
 Might be moved to depart from the tent. Then Aias, Telamon's son,
 Brake forth in the midst of them all, and spake that godlike one :

" O Zeus-born son of Laertes, Odysseus shiftful at need,
 Let us go, for I ween that the end of our message shall nowise speed 625
 To be brought to fulfilment this day ; but now must we hasten and bear
 To the Danaan men the tale of our faring, how evil soe'er ;
 For I ween they be sitting and waiting us now : but Achilles hath turned
 To tameless fury the spirit of might in his breast that burned.

On his friends' lovingkindness he looketh not back in his stiff-necked pride, 630
 On the love by the galleys that crowned him far above all beside.

O pitiless !—lo, from the hand that a brother's blood hath defiled
 One taketh atonement for blood, and the price for a murdered child,
 So that for ransom untold the slayer in peace may dwell,
 And curbed is the heart of the wronged, and his spirit's purpose fell, 635
 When he taketh the price :—but a vengeance-thirst that nothing can slake
 The Gods have set in thy breast for naught but a damsel's sake !

Lo, now do we offer thee seven, and they the fairest on earth,
 Many gifts therewithal :—nay then, in thine heart let ruth have birth,
 And have thou respect to thine hall : behold, thy guests we are 640

From the Danaan throng : we would fain be nearest to thee by far
And dearest of all the men of Achaia's host of war."

Then unto him fleet-footed Achilles made answer and spoke :
" Aias the Zeus-born, Telamon's scion, chieftain of folk,
Well nigh as sayeth mine own soul, so hast thou spoken all ; 645
Howbeit mine heart yet swelleth with rage, whensoe'er I recall
Those deeds, how Atreides amidst of the Argives wrought my shame,
As though he had dealt with an alien wretch without honour or name !
But now go ye with mine answer, and tell them the word that I say :
I will think not of blood-drenched battle, nor get me up to the fray, 650
Or ever the son of the war-wise Priam, Hector divine,
Shall win to the tents and the ships of the Myrmidon battle-line,
Slaying the Argive men, and shall smirch our galleys with fire.
But about my tent and my galley shall Hector's grim desire
Be assuaged, and his battle-onset, I ween, shall come not nigher." 655

Then raised each man the double-chalice cup to his lips,
And they poured to the Gods, and they hied them, Odysseus first, to the ships.
But Patroclus unto the henchmen and handmaids spake his behest
Swiftly to spread the thick-strewn couch for Phoinix' rest. [said, 660
And they hearkened with heed, and they spread the couch as the hero had
That of fleeces and rugs and of linen soft as down was the bed.
There laid him the ancient to rest, and abode the dawn of day.
In the innermost part of his stately pavilion Achilles lay ;
And beside him a woman, the captive he brought from Lemnos-town,
Phorbas' child, Diomède the beautiful-checked, lay down. 665

And Patroclus lay on the further side, and with him withal
 Was fair-girt Iphis ; Achilles had given that war-won thrall
 When he took steep Skyros, and scaled Enyeus' crag-built wall.

But when herald and chief to the tent of Atreus' son drew nigh,
 Up rose the sons of Achaia with golden cups held high, 670
 And they pledged them, this man and that, and they asked of their tidings then ;
 But the first that questioned was Lord Agamemnon, the King of Men :

" Come, tell me, O glorious Odysseus, Achaia's crown of fame,—
 Is it so, that he willeth to shield our ships from the ravening flame ?
 Or doth he refuse, and doth rage in his haughty spirit abide ? " 675

Answered and spake unto him Odysseus, the man toil-tried :
 " Agamemnon King of Men, far-famous Atreus' son,
 He refuseth to quench his wrath-flame, but more than in days bygone
 Is he filled with fury, yea, and of thee and thy gifts will he none.
 He biddeth that thou thyself with thine Argive warrior-band 680
 Take thought to deliver the ships and the men of Achaia-land.
 But himself hath threatened, so soon as appeareth the dawn of day,
 To drag his fair-benched, wave-rocked galleys asea through the spray.
 Yea, to the rest of our host, said he, would he give this rede,
 Homeward to sail, for that never your expectation should speed 685
 That Ilium the steep should be won, for that far-seeing Zeus stretcheth out
 His hand for her shield, and the hearts of her folk be uplifted and stout.
 So spake he, and these which followed with me shall be witness to it,
 Even Aias, and yonder heralds twain, men prudent of wit.
 But Phoinix the old at Achilles' behest there lieth this night, 690

To the end he may go with him in the galleys with morning light
To his fatherland-home, if he will, but not in his own despite."

So did he speak, and in silence hushed were they all as they heard,
Aghast at his tale, at Achilles' grim and vehement word.

So long time sat the sons of Achaia in speechless grief, 695

Till the battle-helper arose, and cried Diomedes the chief :

"Agamemnon, ruler of men, far-famous Atreus' seed,

Thou shouldst nowise have prayed unto Peleus' princely son in thy need,

Proffering gifts untold : high-stomached he was heretofore,

But now hath his spirit been pride-uplifted of thee yet more. 700

Go to, we will let be him : peradventure the man will go,

Peradventure remain : in that hour shall he fight, when biddeth him so

The soul in his breast, and a God uprouseth him on to the fray.

But come ye, as I shall speak, even so let us all obey :—

Now get ye unto your rest, since cheered be your hearts with food 705

And with wine, for herein is your strength and your battle-hardihood.

But so soon as the beautiful Dawn rose-fingered shall shine from afar,

Swiftly in front of the ships range hero and battle-car,

Cheering them on, and thyself in the forefront be found of the war."

So did he speak, and shouted the princes with one accord 710

Praising the rede of the strong Diomedes, the horse-quelling lord.

So they poured the libation, and passed each one to his tent by the deep,

There did they lay them adown, and received the gift of sleep.

BOOK X.

Of the slaughter wrought in the night by Tydeus' son and Odysseus.

HERE by the galleys the rest of the chiefs of Achaia's array
Slept through the night, by slumber soft overborne as they lay.
But on Atreus' son Agamemnon the shepherd of folk pressed not
The sweet sleep-fetter, for still in his soul surged many a thought.
And as when the lord of Hêrê the fair-tressed lighteneth, 5
Making ready his deluging rains or the hail of his frozen breath,
Or the storm's white drift when the snowflakes be sifted the lealand o'er,
Or perchance the yawning jaws of bitter-ravening war ;
So fast from his breast did the king Agamemnon the groans outpour,
From the depth of his heart, and within him his spirit lamented sore. 10
Whensoe'er on the plain far-stretching away unto Troy he gazed,
He marvelled at all those fires that afront of Ilium blazed,
Whence the music of flutes and of pipes and the clamour of warriors broke ;
And whenso he turned him to look on the ships and Achaia's folk, [15
Many locks from his head by the roots did he tear, and to Zeus high-throned

He upheld them, the while his gallant heart full heavily groaned.
And thus, in the thoughts of his soul, him seemed it were best to be done,—
To hie him before all men unto Nestor Neleus' son,
If so be he might fashion in council with him some goodly rede
Which might be an averter of bale in the Danaans' bitter need. 20
And he rose from his couch, and he cast his tunic his breast around,
And under his glistening feet his beautiful sandals he bound.
And about him he casteth the hide of a lion of flamelike mane,
A forest-king tawny and huge, and his lance in his hand hath he ta'en.
Upon Lord Menelaus came trembling too : on his eyelids withal 25
Did slumber in no wise brood, in his fear lest mischief befall
The Argive men, who had come far over the sea for his sake
Unto Troy, to enkindle the battle, to bid the war-mood wake.
First over his broad deep chest a panther's hide hath he spread,
A spotted fell ; thereafter he lifted and set on his head 30
His helmet of brass, and he grasped in his brawny hand the spear.
And he hied him to rouse up his brother, whose lordship far and near
Stretched over the Argives, and honoured he was as a God alway.
And he found him clothing his shoulders in goodly war-array
By the stern of his galley, and glad by his coming the king was made. 35
Then first unto him Menelaus the battle-helper said :
“ Why art thou arming thee thus, dear brother ? Art sending out
Some comrade this night for a spy on the Trojans ? Sorely I doubt
No man shall be found to promise such desperate deed unto thee
As to go and to spy out the foemen, alone, and none but he, 40

Through the black dark night : sooth, dauntless of heart that man shall be."

Answered him Lord Agamemnon, and spake with care-bent brow :

"We have need, Menelaus, O fostered of Zeus, both I and thou,
Of helpful counsel to save and deliver from ruin and wrack
The host and the ships, since the purpose of Zeus is now turned back. 45
His soul hath delighted in Hector's offerings more, I wis ;

For ne'er have I seen, neither heard one tell such a marvel as this,
That one man should compass so many terrible deeds in a day
As Hector the Zeus-beloved hath done to the Argive array,
Unholpen, who is not the dear-loved son of Goddess or God ; 50
Yet deeds hath he done that shall lie, I say, for an anguish-load
Long, long on the Argives, and burden the heart of Achaia withal.

But go now, with haste run thou by the ships, and Aias call
Unto me, and Idomeneus : I unto Nestor the godlike will fare,
And will bid him arise, peradventure the ancient king will bear 55
My hest to the troop of the watchmen, the sacred warder-band :
Unto him will they soonest obey, seeing he that beareth command
Of the guard is the old king's son, and with him goeth Mèriones
Idomeneus' henchman, for chiefly we gave them in charge unto these."

But spake Menelaus the battle-helper doubtfully : 60

"Nay, but how meanest thou this, the word of thine he-t unto me ?
Shall I tarry for thine appearing, abiding there with the rest,
Or to thee run back, when meetly accomplished is thy behest ?"

Unto him did the King of Men Agamemnon make reply :

"Nay, tarry thou there, lest haply we pass each other by 65

In returning, for many a path up and down through the host doth lead.
And thou when thou comest bid them to watch with sleepless heed,
Calling on each man, and naming his name, and his race, and his blood,
In courtesy speaking to all, and be not haughty of mood.
But let us too endure all hardness, for Zeus ordained it so, 70
I ween, from our birth, and hath sent us a heritage of woe."

So sped he his brother away, to bear that heedful behest ;
But himself unto Nestor the shepherd of folk hath onward pressed.
And him by his tent and his ship dark-hulled soft-lying he found
On a bed, and beside him his fair-fashioned war-gear lay on the ground, 75
The shield and the lances twain and the morion flashing bright,
And his baldric glittering-gay, wherewith that warrior wight
Was girded, what time he arrayed him to lead his host to the field
Of manslaying fight, for to grievous eld would he nowise yield.
Then raised he himself on his elbow, and lifted his good grey head, 80
And he spake unto Atreus' son, and with questioning speech he said :

"Who art thou that thus by the ships and the host comest faring alone
Through the mirk of the black dark night, when waketh beside thee none ?
Seeking for one of thy mules or thy comrades comest thou so ?
Speak, neither steal thou upon me in silence !—what wilt thou, ho !" 85

Unto him made answer the King of Men Agamemnon, and spoke :
"O Nestor the Neleid, glory of all Achaian folk,
Thou shalt know Agamemnon Atreides, whom Zeus above all the rest
Hath whelmed deep down in affliction, so long as within my breast
Abideth the breath of life, and my will by my limbs is wrought. 90

And I wander thus, for that sleep on mine eyes soft-broodeth not,
But aye for Achaia's wars and her woes am I care-distraught.
For sorely I fear for the Danaan men, neither fixed is mine heart,
As I toss to and fro, but throbbereth as forth of my breast it would start ;
And my armour-splendid limbs beneath me with trembling are shaken. 95
But if aught thou canst do, seeing thou, as I, art of sleep forsaken,
Come with me, and let us go down to the watchmen, and so shall we see
If haply with toil outworn and with drowsihead they be,
That they slumber and wholly forget their charge of the watch of the night,
While foemen be camping anigh them, and nowise know we aright 100
Whether or no they be fain to come forth through the darkness to fight."

And Nestor Gerenia's horseman to him made answer then :
" Agamemnon Atreides, glory-præminent King of Men,
Of a surety for Hector the Counsel-father shall not bring about
All things he deviseth, all dreams that he dreameth perchance, but I doubt 105
He shall have more trouble and anguish than ever before, if at last
The heart of Achilles shall turn, and his anger be overpast.
But with thee will I verily go, and the rest will we waken from sleep,
Tydeides the spear-renowned, and Odysseus of counsels deep,
And Aias the swift, and Phyleus' scion the battle-fain. 110
But I would that some one would go moreover, and call these twain,
Even Aias the god-strong wight and Idomeneus king of Crete ;
For nowise anigh be their ships, but the uttermost part of the fleet.
But, how worship-worthy soever and dear Menelaus be,
I will chide him, yea, though thou be wroth, I will hide it not from thee, 115

For that yet he is sleeping, and leaveth the toil unto thee alone :

Now ought he to toil, and to go unto every mightiest one

Supplicating ; for now is there come on us need overmastering."

Unto him Agamemnon made answer, and spake the war-folk's king : [120

"Old sire, otherwhiles shalt thou chide him—I bid thee with all mine heart,
For that oft is he slack of hand, and is loth to play his part,

Not for that he yieldeth to sloth or to folly in any wise ;

But ever to me-ward he looketh, and waiteth for me to arise.

But to-night hath he wakened before me, and came and stood by my head.

Even him, to bid hither the heroes for whom thou hast asked, have I sped. 125

Come, let us go : as for them, we shall find them in front of the gate

With the watchmen, for thus did I bid them thy coming and mine to await."

Unto him did Nestor Gerenia's chariot-champion say :

"Now therefore no Argive with him shall be wroth, nor disobey

When hereafter he rouseth the battle and calleth them on to the fray." 130

So did he speak, and he cast his tunic his breast around,

And under his glistening feet his beautiful sandals he bound,

And around him he buckled a mantle whose crimson flame-like shone,

Two-folded and wide, and the thick soft fur lay deep thereon.

Then grasped he his massy spear keen-pointed with stubborn brass, 135

And unto the brazen-harnessed Achaians' ships did he pass.

Then first came they to Odysseus, Zeus's counsel-peer ;

And the hero was wakened from sleep by Nestor's voice in his ear ;

By Gerenia's horseman the slumber-veil from his soul was rent ; [140

And he came and he spake to the twain, forth-stepping in front of his tent :

"For what cause thus to my galleys alone through the host do ye roam
Through the balmy night? What grievous need on the heroes is come?"

Made answer to him Gerenian Nestor, the lord of the steed :

"O Zeus and Laertes' son, Odysseus shiftful at need,
Be not indignant, for sore is Achaia's trouble to-night. 145
But come, that we waken another for whom it is meet and right
To be joined with us in our counsel whether to flee or to fight."

So spake he, and back to his tent did Odysseus the shiftful stride,
And he cast on his shoulders his rich-wrought buckler, and after them hied.
So they passed unto Tydeus' son Diomedes, and him they found 150
Without his tent in his war-gear arrayed, and his comrades around
Lay sleeping ; beneath their heads were their bucklers, and each man's lance
Was set upright on the spike, and afar did the brass-gleam glance
Like the lightning of Zeus. And the hero lay on a warrior's bed,
For beneath him was naught but the hide of a lealand ox outspread, 155
But a bright-dyed rug was folded beneath the chieftain's head.
And Gerenia's horseman Nestor stood by him, and smote him awake,
With a thrust of his foot he moved him, and roused him, and chiding he spake:

"Wake, Tydeus' son, through the livelong night why sleepest thou?
Hast thou not heard how the Trojans be camped on the plain's high brow 160
Full nigh to the galleys, how scant is the space that divideth us now?"

He spake : from his sleep Tydeides full lightly hath leapt forthright ;
And he uttered his voice unto him, and he sped the winged word-flight :

"Tough-moulded art thou, old sire : all resting from toil dost thou scorn.
What, are there no Achaians beside thee younger-born 165

Who might waken from slumber the kings, as they passed through the host to
 But for thee, grey father, no man may deal with thee, I trow ! " [and fro ?

Unto him made answer Nestor, Gerenia's chariot-lord :

" Yea, fitly and well, my son, hast thou spoken every word.

Sooth, I have goodly sons, I have warfolk withal not a few ; 170

And of these might one go forth our summoning to do :

But heaviest need hath constrained the Achaians hereunto :

For now the decision is set as it were on a razor's edge

For all the Achaians, or bitter destruction or life's sure pledge.

But go now, rouse up Nias the swift and Phyleus' son,— 175

If thou hast such compassion on me,—for that thou art the younger one."

Then he cast on his shoulders the hide of a lion of flamelike mane,

So huge that it reached to his feet, and his spear in his hand hath he ta'en.

And he hied him away, and he roused and brought those heroes twain.

So when these were met in the place where the troop of the warders lay, 180

The chiefs of the warders in no wise sleeping there found they.

But every man awake as they sat in their war-array.

And as dogs keep painful watch in a fold about the sheep

As they hearken a mighty beast, which adown from the mountain-steep

Through the forest is coming, and riseth against him a loud outcry 185

Of men and of dogs, and gone is their sleep from them utterly ;

Even so from the eyelids of these was sweet sleep utterly gone,

As they watched through the evil night, for that ever and anon

Plainward they turned them, to hark if the Trojans would haply set on.

And the old king looked upon these, and his spirit was gladness-stirred, 190

And the winged speech leapt from his lips, and he spake a heartening word :

“ Still thus keep watch, dear sons, let slumber on no man seize,
Lest we haply be made a triumph-glee to our enemies.”

So spake he, and over the trench he sprang, and behind him sped
The kings of the Argives, the chiefs that were called to the council-stead. 195
And with them went Nestor's glorious son and Mēriones,
Forasmuch as the rest to the council of princes had summoned these.
And when they had crossed the deep-delved trench, they sat them down
In a space where the earth showed clear mid the corpses thickly-strown
Of the men which were falling when thunderbolt Hector turned him aback 200
From slaying the Argives, when night's veil fell on the battle-wrack.
There sat they down, and began forthright their counsel to take :
And Gerenia's chariot-champion arose, and Nestor spake :

“ Friends, is there none of you hath in his own heart dauntless-bold
Such trust as to go forth hence to the Trojans haughty-souled, 205
If he haply might catch any laggard that spoiling loitereth,
Or might hear peradventure amidst of their host a rumour's breath
Of all that they counsel together, whether they fiercely yearn
Here to remain by our galleys afar from their town, or return
Cityward, since they have thus overborne the Achaian men ? 210
Even all these things might he learn, and might win unto us again
Scatheless : great should his glory be then wide under the heaven
Among all earth-folk, and a goodly gift unto him should be given.
For of all the chieftains that rule mid the galleys, both most and least,
Shall every man of them give unto him a ewe black-fleeced, 215

With her yearling lamb, for of all possessions is this the best ;
And at banquets and fellowship-feasts shall he still be the chiefest guest."

So spake he, and awed into silence was every man that heard,
Till lord Diomedes the battle-helper spake the word :

" Nestor, me doth mine heart prick on, and my courage is high 220
To enter the host of the Trojans, the foes that abide so nigh.
But if peradventure another with me on the quest would fare,
More should our comfort be then, and stouter of heart we were.
And if two be together, one haply discerneth before his friend
That which is best ; and alone though the keen glance comprehend, 225
Yet the wit-shaft is shorter of flight, the purpose shall lightlier bend."

He spake, and full many to go with the lord Diomedes were fain :
The Aiantes were fain thereof, the War-god's henchmen twain,
And Mèriones, and full eager the son of Nestor was found,
And fain was Atreus' son, Menelaus the spear-renowned ; 230
And eager to enter the host of the foes was the steadfast-souled,
Even Odysseus, for ever his spirit was dauntless-bold.
But arose Agamemnon the King of Men, and thus spake he :

" Diomedes, Tydeus' son, most dear to the heart of me,
Choose thou for thy fellow even as seemeth good in thine eyes, 235
Even the best for thine helping—thou seest how many arise ;—
Neither have thou respect unto persons, to leave who is best for the deed
And by reason of shamefastness to take who shall fail thee at need,
Looking unto his lineage,—not though he be of the kinglier seed."

So spake he, fearing for bright-haired Menelaus' sake. 240

And to them Diomedes the battle-helper answered and spake :

“ If indeed I shall choose my companion, according to this your word,
How shall I then forget Odysseus the godlike lord ?

Full eager his heart is ever, and high doth his courage swell

In all manner of toils, and Pallas Athênê loveth him well. 245

If he shall go with me, even from the midst of flame fierce-burning

Will we both win back, for that matchless he is in keen-discerning.”

Answered and spake Odysseus the godlike, the man toil-tried :

“ Tydeides, praise not me overmeasure, nor yet do thou chide ;

For thou speakest to them that know, to the Argive chieftain-band. 250

Come, let us go : far spent is the night, and the dawn is at hand,

And the stars have sloped to the west ; of the tide of the night there be gone

Two watches by this, and now remaineth the third alone.”

So did they speak, and their terrible battle-gear did they don.

Thrasymêdes the battle-bider gave unto Tydeus' son 255

A two-edged sword, for his own had he left by his black ship's side,

And a shield ; and he set on his head a morion of tough bull-hide ;

Coneless and crestless it was, which menfolk wont to call

The skull-cap—it wardeth the heads of young men stalwart and tall.

And Mêriones to Odysseus a bow and a quiver brought, 260

And a sword ; and the hero set on his head a helmet wrought

Of hide, and with many a thong within was it firmly braced,

And without it the ivory-gleaming tusks of a boar were placed.

Closely on this side and that were they set in a grinning row, [265

Well and craftsmanly wrought, and within was a cushion of felt for the brow

It was stolen from Eleon the town of Amyntor Ormenus' child ;
 For Autolykus brake through the wall of his palace stately-piled.
 To Kythêran Amphidamas gave he the prize to Skandeia to bear :
 And to Molus Amphidamas gave it, a guest-gift rich and rare,
 And to Mêriones did he give it, a battle-fence for his son. 270
 Now darkly it claspeth the head of Odysseus, set thereon.

So when in their terrible harness of battle arrayed they were,
 Forth went they, and left behind them all the chieftains there.
 And to rightward did Pallas Athênê send, to their path full nigh,
 A heron beside them flying : they saw it not with the eye 275
 Through the mirk of the black dark night, howbeit they heard its cry.
 And Odysseus was glad for the omen, and thus to Athênê he prayed :

“ Hear, child of the Aegis-father, who comest still to mine aid
 In all my manifold toils, and whithersoever I wend
 I 'scape not thine eye : Athênê, be now if ever my friend, 280
 And vouchsafe us to win to the galleys with goodly renown once more,
 Having compassed a mighty deed that shall vex the Trojans sore.”

Then prayed Diomedes the battle-stay to the power unseen :
 “ Hearken to me too, Daughter of Zeus, unwearied Queen !
 Go with me, as once thou wentest with Tydeus my father, then 285
 When he fared unto Thebes, when the message he bare of Achaia's men.
 The battle-harnessed Achaians he left by Asôpus' side,
 But himself with a word of peace to the folk Kadmeian hied.
 But terrible deeds he wrought as backward he wended again,
 By thine help, Goddess divine, for thou stoodst by his side full fain. 290

Even so of thy gracious will stand by me and guard me now ;
 And so will I offer to thee a broad-browed yearling cow,
 Unbroken, which no man ever beneath the yoke hath led ;
 Even this will I offer to thee, and the horns shall be gold-overspread."

So spake they praying, and Pallas Athênê heard their cry. 295
 So when they had put up their prayer to the daughter of Zeus most high,
 They fared on their way through the mirk of the night like lions twain,
 Over slaughter, o'er corpses, midst armour and dark-clotted blood of the slain.

But Hector in no wise suffered the Trojans in sleep to rest,
 But he gathered together in one place all their mightiest, 300
 Even all the battle-chieftains and lords of the Trojan folk :
 And unto their gathered array of his deep dark counsel he spoke :

" Who is there will promise and bring to pass this deed for me
 For a goodly gift ?—yea surely unstinted his guerdon shall be :
 I will give him a chariot and war-steeds twain with high-arched crest ; 305
 Of all mid Achaia's sea-swift ships shall they be the best ;
 Whosoever shall dare this deed, and the high renown shall earn,
 Even this—to adventure anigh to the ships fleet-faring, and learn
 Whether the sea-swift galleys be guarded even as before,
 Or whether the foe by the might of our hands overborne in the war 310
 One with another take counsel of flight, and be nowise fain
 Of the night-watch, with toil outworn and the terrible battle-strain."

So spake he, and hushed for a space were they all, and answered him none.
 Now amidst of the Trojans was found one Dolon, Eumêdes' son,
 Son of the herald divine, right wealthy in gold and in brass ; 315

Ill-favoured he was to behold, howbeit fleet-footed he was :

And the man was an only son with sisters five beside.

So there in the midst of the Trojans to Hector the captain he cried :

“ Hector, mine heart hath upstirred me, my spirit within me doth burn
To go to the ships fleet-faring the tale of the night to learn. 320

But come now, uplift me thy sceptre, and swear unto me this night
That thou surely wilt give me the steeds and the chariot with brass rich-dight
Which be wont to bear the princely Peleus' son to the fight.

No bootless scout will I be unto thee, nor thine hope will I cheat :

I will press right on through the midst of their host, till I come to the fleet, 325

To the galley of King Agamemnon, for there their chiefest shall be,

I ween, to take counsel together, whether to fight or to flee.”

Then Hector took sceptre in hand, and he sware that solemn vow :

“ Let Zeus, loud-thundering lord of Hêrê, be witness now,
That none other Trojan beside thee behind those steeds shall ride, 330
But thine evermore shall they be, I say it, thy joy and thy pride.”

But he sware him a bootless oath, yet he kindled his spirit so.

Forthright on his shoulders hath Dolon slung his bended bow ;
And without his raiment he folded around him a grey wolf's skin ;
On his head was a ferret-fur cap, in his hand was a javelin keen. 335

Then he turned him to go from the host to the ships ; but it was not his doom
Again from the ships to return, and with tidings to Hector to come.

Now so soon as he left behind him the throng of the horses and men,

Fast sped he along the path : but ware of his coming then
Was Odysseus : to lord Diomedes straight did the Zeus-born say : 340

“Diomedes, yonder there cometh one of the foes' array.

I know not whether to spy on the ships he hath hitherward hied,
Or to spoil of its armour the body of one of the dead which have died.
Now suffer we first that he pass us a little way on the plain :
If thereafter we rush on his track shall we swiftly o'ertake him again. 345
But and if peradventure the wight shall outrun us by speed of his feet,
Leaping on with the spear shalt thou head him still from the host to the fleet,
Lest haply citywards fleeing our expectation he cheat.”

Then turned they aside from the path, and mid corpses adown did they lie ;
And he in his heedlessness swift-running onward hath passed them by. 350
But when he was gotten as far as the length of the furrow-space
Of mules outstripping oxen—for swifter they be of their pace
In dragging the jointed plough through the deep-soiled fallow-land,—
Then ran they upon him, and hearing the foot-beat awhile did he stand : [355
For he deemed they were comrades sent from the host of Troy on his track
At Hector's counter-command from the quest to turn him aback.
But when they were drawn so nigh—yea, nigher than javelin-cast,
He knew them for foemen, and bent his swift knees hurrying fast
To escape them, and they in the chase their strong feet fiercely strained.
And as when two sharp-fanged hounds in the hunting craft well-trained 360
Follow hard on a doe or a hare with tireless speed evermore
Through the tangled ways of the woodland, and screaming it fleeth before,
So Tydeus' son and Odysseus the war-burg-waster ever
Unswerving pursued, and the fleer still from his folk did they sever.
But when in a little more on the watchmen Dolon would light, 365

As he fled to the ships, into Tydeus' son was sudden might
Breathed of Athénê, that none of Achaia's brass-mailed host
Might boast to have smitten him first, and the hero's glory be lost.
Leaping on with the lance then cried Diomedes the strong to the floor : [370

“ Stand ho ! or my javelin shall reach thee : I tell thee, if leapeth the spear
From mine hand, not long shalt thou 'scape from destruction sudden-sheer ! ” :

He spake, and he hurled with the lance, but of purpose he missed the wight :
And the point of the fair-polished spear flew over his shoulder to right,
And into the earth it plunged ; and he halted sore afraid,

Trembling,—the while of his teeth a chattering sound was made,— 375
White with his fear ; and the twain hard-panting sprang to his side, [cried
And they gripped his hands ; and the wretch brake forth into weeping, and

“ O take me alive : I will ransom myself, for at home have I store
Of brass and of gold, and of iron the toil-born child of the ore ;
And my father would lavish of these, he would nowise count the cost 380
If he heard that alive I lay mid the ships of the Danaan host.”

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled answereth him, and he saith :
“ Be thou of good cheer, let thy spirit be nowise o'ershadowed of death.
But come now, answer me this, and the truth unswerving declare :
Unto what end thus from the host of Troy to the ships dost thou fare 385
Through the black dark night, when sleep all other mortals beside ?
Is it so, that thou comest to spoil some one of the dead which have died ?
Or did Hector send thee forth for to spy upon whatso is done
By the hollow ships ? or was it thine own soul pricked thee on ? ”

Sore trembled the limbs of Dolon beneath him, and thus did he say : 390

" With many a mad hope Hector led my mind astray,
 Who pledged him to give me the thunderfoot horses that bear to the fight
 Peleus' son, and his chariot with brass-work richly dight.
 Through the mirk of the black night swiftly-fleeting he bade me to go
 Even till I came to the host of Achaia, and there to know 395
 Whether the sea-swift galleys be guarded like as before,
 Or whether the foe by the might of our hands overborne in the war
 One with another take counsel of flight, and be nowise fain
 Of the night-watch, with toil outworn and the terrible battle-strain."

Smiled on him Odysseus the manifold-counselled, and made reply : 400
 " Of a surety thine heart was set on a gift both great and high,
 The horses of Aiakus' scion the war-wise ; hard they are
 For a mortal to tame their fury, or drive in the battle-car,
 Save for Achilles alone, whom a deathless mother bare.
 But come now, answer me this, and the truth unswerving declare : 405
 Where leftest thou Hector the shepherd of folk when thou hither didst fare ?
 And where is his harness of battle lying ?—his horses where ?
 And what of the rest of the Trojans ?—or watch they or slumber they ?
 And what is the counsel they take ?—are they furious-fain to stay
 Here by our galleys afar from their town, or to turn again 410
 Cityward, since they have overborne the Achaian men ? "

Answered him Dolon the son of Eumêdes, and thus spake he :
 " Therefore herein will I tell the truth unswerving to thee.
 Hector this night and the princes, the wise in counselling,
 By the barrow of Ilus the godlike be met in the council-ring, 415

From the tumult afar, but for this that thou askest as touching the guard,
 There is none set apart from the host to keep it with watch and ward.
 For at all the bivouac-fires that the Trojans perforce must light
 There waking they sit, and they cheer one another to watch through the night.
 Howbeit the while the men of their war-aid battle-renowned 420
 Have left to the Trojans to watch, but themselves lie slumber-drowned,
 For that nowise anigh unto these be their wives and their children found."

Then Odysseus the manifold-counselled answered the captive foe :
 "How then?—intermingled with horse-quelling Trojans slumber they so,
 Or aloof do they lie?—render answer to me, to the end I may know." 425

Answered him Dolon the son of Eumêdes, and thus spake he :
 "Therefore herein will I tell the truth unswerving to thee.
 By the sea be the Karian folk, and Paionia's bowmen, then
 The Lelegan host and the Kaukons and godlike Pelasgian men,
 And by Thymbrê the Lycians and Mysians stately-charioted, 430
 And the Phrygian steeds, and the car-borne host from Maionia led.
 —But of these things one by one what boots it thus to enquire?
 For if of a truth to enter the Trojan throng ye desire,
 Lo yonder the new-come Thracians aloof, even outermost,
 With the scion of Etoneus, King Rhesus, amidst of their host. 435
 He hath horses the fairest and greatest that ever my hap was to see,
 Whiter than snow, and in speed as the blasts of the wind they be.
 And cunningly-dight is his battle-chariot with silver and gold ;
 And with war-gear golden, gigantic, a wondrous thing to behold,
 He hath come : for the wearing of deathling men it seemeth not 440

Fashioned, but rather it seemeth for Gods everlasting wrought.
But now do ye bring me hence to your sea-swift ships on the strand,
Or bind me and leave me here fast-fettered in pitiless band,
That so, when again ye return unto me, my words may be tried,
Whether this that I spake was truth, or whether my lips have lied." 445

Spake Diomedes the strong with terribly-glaring eyes :
" Dolon, think not in thine heart to escape us in any wise,
For all thy tidings of good, forasmuch as our captive thou art ;
For if we shall hold thee to ransom now, or shall let thee depart,
To Achaia's sea-swift ships wouldst thou surely return again, 450
Either to play the spy, or to strive in the battle-strain.
But and if thou shalt lose thy life by mine hands' death-dealing stroke,
Never thereafter wilt thou be a grief to the Argive folk."

He spake, and that other to make supplication outstretched his hand
To his beard,—but he leapt on him, smote mid-neck with his battle-brand ;
Clear through the sinews twain hath it flashed with its lightning sweep,
And rolled was his head in the dust as the prayer yet moaned on his lip.
Then did they take the helmet of ferret-fur wrought from his head,
And the wolf-skin and back-springing bow, and the long lance-shaft of the dead.
Then did Odysseus the godlike upraise to the Giver of Prey, 460
Even Athênê, the spoils, and thus in his prayer did he say :

" Goddess, I hail thee with these, for on thee most chiefly of all
The Deathless Ones in the height of Olympus that dwell will we call.
Now grant furthermore that on Thracia's horses and men we may fall."

So did he speak, and therewith he uplifted and set them on high 465

On a tamarisk-bush, and a plain-seen token he set thereby ;
For he gathered a handful of reeds and of thick-grown tamarisk-sprays,
Lest they haply in darkness should miss it, returning by night-shadowed ways.
Then onward mid arms of the dead and mid blood dark-clotted they passed,
Until to the host of the Thracian men they came at the last. 470
There toil-over worn were they sleeping, and fair did the brazen gleam
Of the armour in three rows orderly ranked from the dark earth stream.
And beside each chieftain were tethered the steeds of his chariot-team.
And Rhesus amidst of his men lay sleeping, and hard by him
Were his fleet steeds bound with thongs to the end of the chariot-rim. 475
And Odysseus espied him, and showed, as his fellow forthright he addressed :
 " Lo, this is the man, Diomedes, and these be the steeds of our quest,
Which Dolon foretold unto us, the captive we slew but now.
Come then, and thy battle-night put thou forth : thou oughtest not, thou,
Idly to stand with thy weapons : the steeds from the car do thou lead, 480
Or fall thou to slaying the men, and I to the steeds will give heed."
Then breathed Athênê the grey-eyed might into Tydeus' son ;
And on this side and that side he slew, and ever the ghastly groan
Arose from the falchion-hewn, and with blood was the earth stained red.
And even as a lion that cometh on flocks unshepherded, 485
On goats or on sheep, rusheth on them with fearful and fell intent,
Even so against Thracia's men the son of Tydeus went,
Until he had slain of them twelve : and Odysseus the counsel-stored,—
Unto whomso Tydeides drew nigh and smote with the edge of the sword,
Odysseus came after, and dragged aside by the foot the slain, 490

Purposing thus in his soul, that the steeds of the beautiful mane
 Lightly between them might pass, neither start in affrighted mood
 As they trod on the corpses, for strange were they yet unto murder and blood.
 But when came Tydeides at last to the king, he reft away
 Sweet life from the thirteenth foe, as heavily breathing he lay, 495
 For that over his head did an awful nightmare-vision rise
 That night, even Oineus' seed, by Pallas Athênê's device.
 But the thunderfoot horses the while Odysseus the steadfast-brave
 Loosed, and with thongs he bound them together, and forth he drave
 From the press with strokes of his bow, forasmuch as he had not thought 500
 To take the glittering whip from the chariot cunningly wrought.
 Then he whistled to Diomedes the godlike the signal-call.
 But he tarried, and mused what deed he should do most daring of all ;
 Whether to take the car where the rich-wrought armour lay,
 And to drag it thence by the pole, or uplift it and bear it away, 505
 Or whether to slay yet more of the children of Thracia-land.
 And as thus in his spirit he mused, by his side did Athênê stand,
 And she stayed Diomedes the godlike, and spake to the overbold :
 " Take thought for returning, thou son of Tydeus the mighty-souled,
 Unto the hollow ships, lest thou even come thither in flight. 510
 Have a care lest another God awaken the Trojans this night."
 So did she speak, forthright to the Goddess he gave good heed.
 He hath mounted in haste, with his bow hath Odysseus lashed them to speed ;
 Then flew to Achaia's sea-swift ships each gallant steed.
 Yet no blind watch was kept of Apollo Silverbow, 515

When he marked how Athênê cared for the son of Tydeus so.
Wrathful against her he entered the host of the Trojan folk,
And Hippokoön, counsellor-chief of the Thracians, from slumber he woke,
The high-born kinsman of Rhesus. From sleep he upstarted, and lo,
Void was the place where the fleet steeds stood but a little ago ; 520
And men lay gasping on earth with slaughter ghastly-dyed :
And he shrieked, and aloud on the name of his dear-loved friend he cried.
And a cry from the Trojans and tumult unspeakable rose thereupon,
As they rushed to the place, and stared at the deeds of horror done,
While the heroes that wrought them afar to their hollow galleys were gone. 525

But so soon as they came unto where they had smitten Hector's spy,
Odysseus the Zeus-loved stayed the fleetfoot steeds thereby ;
And Tydeides leapt to the ground, and the blood-stained spoils of the slain
He gave to Odysseus' hands, and he hasted and mounted again.
And he lashed those coursers fleet, and with eager speed they flew 530
To the hollow ships—yea, fain was their spirit so to do.

And Nestor cried, for that first he heard that far hoof-stroke :
“O friends, ye lords of the Argives, and chiefs of battle-folk,
False shall my word be or true ?—yet my spirit is bidding me speak :—
Lo, on mine ears doth the thud of the trampling of swift steeds break. 535
O might it but be, that Odysseus and prince Diomedes the strong
Thus swiftly come driving the thunderfoot steeds from the Trojan throng !
But sorely mine heart is adread lest mischief hath come in their quest
From the battle-onset of Troy to the Argive bravest and best.”

Not yet was the word full-spoken, when lo, they were come, even they. 540

And down to the earth they sprang, and the men of Achaia's array
 With hand-clasp joyfully greeted the heroes, and loving word ;
 And Nestor questioned them first, Gerenia's chariot-lord :

“ Come tell me, O glorious Odysseus, Achaia's mighty boast,
 In what wise did ye win these steeds ?—did ye enter the Trojan host ? 545
 Or was it a God that gave them, who met you this night by the way ?
 Wondrous like to the rays of the sun's white splendour are they !
 Evermore do I plunge mid the fight with the Trojans : ye never shall say
 That ye found by the galleys abiding Gerenia's warrior grey :
 But never such horses as these have I seen, nor have known ere now. 550
 Nay, but a God hath met you, and given you these, I trow :
 For dear are ye both unto Zeus the Cloudrack-driver, I ween,
 And the child of the Aegis-lord, Athênê the grey-eyed Queen.”


Made answer Odysseus to him, and the manifold-counselled spoke
 “ O Nestor Neleus' son, thou praise of Achaia's folk, 555
 Goodlier horses than these might a God's gift lightly be,
 If such were his will, for the Gods be mightier far than we.
 But as touching the steeds whereof thou enquirest, ancient, they came
 But of late from the land of Thrace, and slain is the lord of the same
 By brave Diomedes, and twelve beside him, his mightiest, lie. 560
 And the thirteenth man anigh to the galleys we slew, a spy
 Whom Hector the chief and the rest of the lordly Trojans sent
 To know of the state of the host, and to search out our intent.”

Then the thunderfoot horses he drave with laughter of triumph-glee
 Over the trench, and the heroes followed exultingly. 565

So when they were come to Tydeides' pavilion stately and fair,
Those horses with thongs of hide well-fashioned tethered they there
Unto the manger whereat Diomedes war-steeds fleet
Were standing arow, and were eating the honey-savoured wheat.
But the blood-bespattered spoils of Dolon Odysseus laid 570
In the stern of his ship, till his vow to Athênê the Queen should be paid.
Then the heroes plunged in the sea, and the sweat of their labour they washed
From ankle, from neck, and from thigh with the slaughter-stains dark-splashed.
And so soon as the sea-wave had cleansed the abundant sweat from their skin,
The while by its clear cool dash their hearts were refreshed within, 575
Into the burnished lavers they stepped, till the pain of their toil
Melted away, and thereafter anointed their bodies with oil.
Then sat they down to the supper, and drew from the brimming bowl
And poured to Athênê the wine that as honey is sweet to the soul.

BOOK XI.

How the mightiest chiefs of Achaia were stricken amidst of the battle.

 FROM her couch by lordly Tithonus' side did the Dawn upspring,
Her light to the Deathless Ones and the children of men to bring.
Then Zeus sped Discord forth to Achaia's ships fleet-faring,
And the signal-token of war in her hands was the grim fiend bearing.
On the huge dark bulk of Odysseus' galley she took her stand— 5
For that midmost it lay—to send forth her voice upon either hand,
Hitherward, to the tent of Aias Telamon's son, and yonder
To Achilles' tent, for their galleys had these beached farthest asunder, [rely.
For on naught save their manhood and strength of their hands would the heroes
There stood the Goddess, and cried with a great and a terrible cry 10
Wild-ringing, and filled the heart of every Achaian with might ;
And she made them fain of the onset, afire for the stintless fight :
And suddenly fairer and sweeter the battle-play seemed unto these
Than to flee in the hollow ships to their fatherland far overseas.
Then shouted Atreides commanding the host of the Argives to don 15

Their harness of fight, and he sheathed him in brass that flame-like shone.
First unto his legs did he lay the greaves fair-glittering
Clasping the ankle around with the burnished silver ring.
Thereafter the fence of his corslet he cast about his breast,
Which Kinyrês gave him, a princely gift to a princely guest. 20
For to Cyprus the mighty rumour had come, how Achaia's host
Were making them ready to sail in their ships to the Troyland coast :
Wherefore he gave it, a gift that should make the king's heart glad.
Twice six bands of the cyanus darkly-gleaming it had,
And of flaming gold twice six, and of glittering tin a score : 25
And dark-blue snakes to the gorget thereof writhed up evermore,
Three upon either side ; as the rainbow that Kronos' son
Hath set in the clouds for a sign unto mortals, so they shone.
And he slung from his shoulders his sword with golden studs bestarred
Flashing around, and the same did a scabbard of silver guard. 30
And it clashed by his side as it hung by many a golden chain.
And his rich-wrought warrior-warding onset-shield hath he ta'en,
Lovely, with twice five circles of brass encompassed about ;
White bosses of tin twice ten from the face thereof flashed out :
And of cyanus darkly-gleaming was one in the midmost space. 35
And thereon was embossed the Gorgon-demon, with stony gaze
Grim-glaring, and Terror and Rout encompassed the Fearful Face.
And the baldric was all of silver ; a serpent of cyanus-blue
Coil upon coil writhed down that glittering band, and there grew
Three heads from the neck of the monster in mazy knots interlaced. 40

And his twin-ridged helmet of fourfold crest on his head hath he placed :
Overglooming the brow of the hero terribly nodded its mane.
And he seized in his grip strong brass-tipped keen-whetted lances twain.
Afar from his harness the sheen of the brass flamed up to the sky.
And Athênê and Hêrê the Queen in thunder spake from on high 45
To honour the king of Mycenae the city of gold thereby.
Then to his charioteer each chieftain gave command
To range in order the steeds by the trench, and to have them in hand.
But themselves on foot in their battle-gear clad to the forefront are gone
Swift-rushing, and quenchless arose the war-cry before the dawn. 50
And long ere the drivers they stood at the trench ready-ranked for the war,
And the chariots a little space after them followed, and fearful uproar
Kronion upstirred, and a ghastly dew from on high he shed
Dank-drizzling with blood through the air, for a sign of his purpose dread
To hurl far down unto Hades many a gallant head. 55

On the swell of the broad plain over against them the Trojan array
Round Hector the mighty and princely Polydamas met for the fray,
And Aeneas, whom Troy's folk honoured like to a God alway,
And Agênor the godlike, and Polybus—these were Antenor's sons
With Akamas stalwart and young and fair as the Deathless Ones. 60
And Hector was bearing his shapely shield in the front of their war.
And even as out of the clouds forth-gleameth a baleful star,
And a moment thereafter mid clouds overshadowing sinketh from sight,
So Hector now flashed forth in the forefront of Troytown's might,
And now was he ranging the rearward : from all his body poured 65

Flame-splendour of brass, as the lightning of Zeus the Aegis-lord.

And as overagainst each other the reapers band by band
Go driving the swath of barley or wheat through the furrowed land
Of a wealthy man, and the sheaves fall thick to the sickle's sweep,
Even so did Achaïans and Trojans each on the other leap 70

Destroying ; they dreamed not of ruinous flight, nor these nor those.
And the battle was equal-poised, and as wolves men rushed at their foes.
And Discord groaning-fraught was exulting that havoc to see,
For none of the Deathless was there with the fighters, but only she.
Nay, amidst them was none of the rest of the Gods, but at peace they were, 75

Sitting their halls within, where the palace builded fair
Of each on the ridge-scarred folds of Olympus rose : and they railed
Bitterly each and all on Kronion the Cloudrack-veiled
That he willed to vouchsafe to the Trojans glory, yet nowise quailed
Allfather, nor recked of their indignation, but throned apart 80
Alone in his glorious majesty sat with triumphant heart,
Looking down on the Trojans' town, on Achaia's ships by the main,
On the bickering glitter of brass, on the slayers and them that were slain.

So all through the morning-tide, and still while the day waxed hot,
Fast fell the folk, as the shafts from host unto host were shot. 85
But it came to pass, at the hour when a woodman breaketh his fast,
Mid a mountain's forest-glens, when his hands grow weary at last
With hewing the stately trees, and his spirit is toil-fordone,
And his soul hath hunger, and sweet is food to the fainting one ;
Then by their valour the Danaan men the battalions burst, 90

On-cheering their fellows from rank unto rank. Agamemnon first
Plunged mid the rout, and Biénor, a shepherd of folk, with his spear
He slew, and thereafter Orleus his henchman-charioteer ;
For he leapt to the earth from his chariot, and stood in the war-king's path ;
But the lance keen-whetted, as onward he rushed in his onset-wrath, 95
Crashed through his brow, nor availed him the massy helmet-rim ;
But through brass and through bone went the spear, and the very brain of him
Was blood-besprent ; so he slew him though never so battle-fain.
And there did the King of Men Agamemnon leave those slain
With breasts bare-gleaming, so soon as he plucked their corslets away. 100
Upon Isus and Antiphus then did he rush with intent to slay,
Two sons of Priam, bastard and wedlock-born, and the twain
In the selfsame chariot rode : 'twas the bastard swayed the rein ;
By his side stood war-famed Antiphus : these in the days overpast
Had Achilles on Ida's spurs with osier withes bound fast, 105
When he came on them feeding their flock ; but for ransom he let them go.
Agamemnon Atreus' son wide-ruling this day is their foe :
On the breast of the one by the pap came his lance as it leapt from afar,
And his sword smote Antiphus hard by the ear, and dashed from his car.
Then hasted the King, and their battle-gear fair from their bodies he tore, 110
Knowing them well, forasmuch as his eyes had beheld them before
By the ships, when from Ida fleet-footed Achilles the captives bore.
And even as the fawns of a hind full lightly be crushed beneath
The jaws of a lion, the helpless prey of his ravening teeth,
When he findeth their covert, and rendeth their tender life away, 115

And their mother may nothing avail for their help in the evil day,
Albeit so near, for on her is there come a horrible dread,
And swiftly through tangled coppice and woodland lawn hath she fled
From the rush of the mighty beast, sweat-recking and terror-spel ;
Even so from destruction no man of the Trojans might save them then, 120
Nay, but themselves fled panic-aghast from the Argive men.
Peisander and battle-bider Hippolochus slain by him fall,
Sons of the subtle Antimachus, him who was foremost of all
To take Alexander's gold, the splendid gift, and to plead
That Helen should not be restored unto Atreus' bright-haired seed. 125
None other than his two sons did the lord Agamemnon meet
In one car riding, and battleward speeding their steeds' swift feet.
Then dropped from the hands of the charioteer the glittering rein,
And the horses in terror were plunging. On rushed like a lion amain
Atreides. But they from the chariot besought him with trembling cries : 130
 " O take us alive, Atreides, accept the ransom-price !
In the halls of Antimachus lieth a goodly treasure-store
Of brass and of gold and of iron the toil-born child of the ore :
And our father would lavish of these, he would nowise count the cost
If he heard that alive we lay mid the ships of the Danaan host." 135
 So weeping, the heart of the king unto pity they fain would have stirred
With words soft-pleading, but ruthless-hard was the voice that they heard :
 " If indeed of the subtle Antimachus ye be the curséd brood,
Who bade, when once Menelaus in Trojan folk-mote stood,—
When he came on an embassy, he and Odysseus the godlike-strong,— 140

To slay him there neither let him return to Achaia's throng,
Now shall ye surely atone for your father's shameful wrong."

He spake, and adown from the chariot to earth Peisander he thrust,
Dashing his spear on his breast, and he rolled on his back in the dust.
Then flightward Hippolochus darted, but him on the ground he slew, 145
Lopping his hands with his falchion, and shearing his neck in two ;
And the head like a millstone rolling mid feet of the fighters he threw.
Then he left them, and there where the ranks thickest-thronging in battle-shock
With his mail-clad Achaians into the heart of the fight hath he dashed. [clashed
And footman was slaying footman that could not choose but fly, 150
And horseman, horseman—from under their feet rose the dust on high
From the plain, by the thundering hoofs of the horses uptossed to the sky—
As they smote with the brass, while Lord Agamemnon slaughtering still
Pursued, and through battle-uproar to his men did his war-cry thrill.
As when ravening fire breaketh out in a forest dark and deep, 155
And the rolling flames upon every side do the wind-whirls sweep,
And the brakes fall shrivelled to ashes before the fire-blast's leap ;
So fell in their flight before King Agamemnon Atreus' seed
The heads of the Trojans, and many a gallant-crested steed
With the clattering cars dashed madly through highways of that wild fray, 160
Bereft of their princely charioteers on the earth who lay,
Foul corpses, far sweeter to vulture's beak than to lips of a bride.
But Zeus from the darts and the dust of the fight drew Hector aside,
Aloof from the murder-ravin, the blood, and the battle-uproar ;
While Atreides cheering the Danaans onward pursued evermore. 165

On, by the barrow of Ilus the ancient, Dardanus' son,
On through the midst of the plain, by the fig-tree sped they on,
Cityward straining, and ever Atreides pursued them with shouts,
And slaughter-defiled his resistless hands with the dark blood-gouts.
But when to the Skaian gate they were come and the oak thereby, 170
There did they rally, and tarried their fellows' drawing nigh.
But some through the midst of the plain fled still, as in terror rush
Kine scared by a lion that stole on the herd in the night's dead hush ;—
But for one doth a dawn of destruction swift and sheer awake,
For the lion with strong teeth suddenly gripped her neck and brake, 175
And her blood and her inwards thereafter his murder-thirst shall slake ;—
So Lord Agamemnon the scion of Atreus followed them fast,
Ever slaying the hindmost, and they fled all terror-aghast.
And many on face or on back from their chariots earthward were dashed [180
By Atreides' hands, as his spear through the storm of his wrath fierce-flashed.
But when in a little more they had come to the steep-built town,
Even to the wall thereof, from the height of the heaven came down
The Father of Gods and of men, and he sat upon Ida's crown,
The fountain-flashing hill : in his hands the thunderbolt lay.
Then Iris the golden-feathered he sped with his message away : 185
“ Go speed thee, Iris the swift, unto Hector, and thus shalt thou say :
So long as he seeth the lord Agamemnon, the king of folk,
Storming afront, making havoc of ranks with the swift death-stroke,
So long let him cross not his path, let him elsewhere cheer his array
On to the grapple with foemen, the tug of the desperate fray. 190

But when by a spear-stab wounded, or smitten by arrow's flight,
He shall leap on his chariot, then will I give the victory-might
Unto Hector, to slay and to slay, by the fair-benched ships till he stand,
And the sun go down, and the darkness-veil overshadow the land."

So spake he to Iris the swift, and the Wind-foot did as he said ; 195
And adown from the heights of Ida to Ilium the holy she sped.
And Hector the godlike, the child of Priam, found she there
On his chariot of horses standing, his war-car fashioned fair.
And Iris the swift-foot bearing the message of Zeus drew near :

"Hector the son of Priam, Zeus's counsel-peer, 200
Zeus Allfather hath sent me to speak this word in thine ear :
So long as thou seest the lord Agamemnon, the king of folk,
Storming afront, making havoc of ranks with the swift death-stroke,
So long shalt thou cross not his path, thou shalt elsewhere cheer thine array
On to the grapple with foemen, the tug of the desperate fray. 205
But when by a spear-stab wounded, or smitten by arrow's flight,
He shall leap on his chariot, then Zeus giveth thee victory-might,
To slay and to slay, until by the fair-benched ships thou stand,
And the sun go down, and the darkness-veil overshadow the land."

So spake she, and Iris flashed from the earth with wingèd speed. 210
Down from his chariot to earth sprang Hector in battle-weed,
And brandishing keen-whetted lances he ranged the host about,
Cheering them on, and he wakened the terrible onset-shout.
So they rallied, and front to front they abode the Achaian men,
And the Argive ranks closed up, and they burst on the foemen again. 215

So the battle was joined : there was no man flinched : still rushed to the front
Agamemnon, fain to be foremost to face the battle's brunt.

Now tell me, ye Muses that dwell in the halls of Olympus' height,
Who first of the war-host braved Agamemnon's battle-might,
Of the home-born Trojan men or their war-aid far-renowned. 220
Stalwart Iphidamas son of Antenor the first was found,
Who was nurtured in Thrèkè the sheep-fed, the land of the deep dark loam,—
I twas Kissés that reared him, a little child, in his palace-home,
His mother's sire, who begat Theano the fair of face.
But so soon as his fosterling grew unto youth-tide's glory and grace, 225
Fain would the ancient have kept him, and gave him his daughter to wife :
But even from the bride-bower he went at the rumour of Troy's great strife
With twice six beakèd galleys that followed him over the tide.
But he left those shapely ships in Perkotè's haven to ride,
But himself over mountain and plain unto Ilium held on his way :— 230
Even he crossed Atreus' son Agamemnon's path that day.
Onward they charged on each other till now they were drawn full near :
Then hurled Agamemnon, and missed, and sideward glanced his spear.
But Iphidamas under his corslet stabbed at his baldric-band,
And onward he drave it with all the strength of his heavy hand : 235
Yet it pierced not the glittering girdle, but ere it might work his intent,
Griding against the silver like lead was the spear-point bent.
Then grasped he the shaft, Agamemnon the lord of many a land,
Like a lion in fury he tugged, and he plucked it out of his hand. [way : 240
Then he lashed at his neck with his falchion, and palsied his strength straight-

Down fell he, and slept the sleep of the sword even there where he lay.
 Ah piteous !—afar from his new-wedded wife for the Trojans he died.
 With great gifts had he won her, yet knew not the grace of the love of his bride :
 For a hundred kine had he given, and promised a thousand more,
 Yea, goats and sheep from the flocks no man might number o'er. 245
 Then Atreus' son Agamemnon spoiled of his harness the slain,
 And the beautiful war-gear back to Achaia's throng hath he ta'en.
 Now when this was beheld of Koön the war-famed hero-chief,
 First of the sons of Antenor, a cloud of mighty grief
 Overshadowed his eyes for the brother that stricken to death lay there. 250
 Sideways he stepped with his lance, and ere Agamemnon was ware
 He stabbed him amidst of the forearm below the elbow-joint,
 And clean through the flesh of him passed the glittering lance's point.
 Then Agamemnon the King of Men sudden-shuddered with pain ;
 Yet not even so from the strife and the war did the hero refrain, 255
 But he rushed upon Koön, grasping his stormwind-toughened spear.
 By the foot was he haling in haste that brother in death still dear—
 For one father begat them,—and cried to the champions the rescue-shout :
 Crashed through his boss-studded shield, as he dragged him through battle-rout,
 The brass-headed lance, and his limbs in the palsy of death were unstrung : 260
 And the hero bestrode him, and down on his brother his head he flung.
 So there of the sons of Antenor fulfilled was their doom, to fall
 By the hands of Atreides the King, and they passed unto Hades' hall.
 On went the hero through ranks of the foemen, and ever he warred [shard, 265
 With the lightning of spears, with the flame of the sword, with the huge rock-

For so long as the blood from the spear-gash yet was trickling warm :
 But at last, when the wound waxed dry, and the gore clotted thick on his arm,
 Then sharp were the pangs that thrilled through the might of Atreus' son.
 As the sharp dart smiteth a woman whose travailing hour is begun,
 Keen-shot by the Eileithuiæ, the Queens of Travail-pain, 270
 The daughters of Hêrê that bring the bitter anguish-strain,
 So sharp were the pangs that thrilled through the might of Atreus' seed.
 And he sprang to his chariot, and spake to his charioteer to speed
 His steeds to the hollow ships, for his heart was anguish-rent :
 And across the Danaan ranks his voice far-ringing he sent : 275
 " Friends, chiefs of the Argive warriors, lords of battle-folk,
 Be ye the defenders now of the sea-swift ships from the shock
 Of the shattering onset-roar, for that Zeus mine hand doth stay,
 And the Counsel-father forbiddeth to fight with the foes all day."
 Then his chariot-henchman lashed the steeds of the beautiful mane 280
 On to the hollow ships, and they flew exceeding fain.
 Foam-flecked were their chests, and beneath all dust-besprent they were,
 As forth of the press of the battle the King sore-stricken they bare.
 But when Hector marked Agamemnon departing at last from the war,
 To the Trojans and Lycians he cried with a great voice pealing afar : 285
 " Trojans and Lycians and Dardans that close in the grapple of fight,
 Quit you like men, my friends, and remember your battle-storm-might !
 Gone is their champion !—to me is vouchsafed a glory-crown
 Of Zeus. On !—speed ye your thunderfoot horses, charging down
 On the Danaan mighty men, to win you triumph-renown !" 290

So cried he, and kindled their courage, and each man's heart beat high
 And as huntsman cheereth onward his white-fanged hounds to fly
 At the haunch of a wild boar tameless-fierce or a lion at bay,
 So cheered he the great-heart Trojans on at the Argive array,
 Even Hector the Priamid, like unto Arês the murder-red. 295
 On in the forefront of battle with heart uplifted he sped,
 And he swooped on the fight like a roaring blast that with hurricane-sweep
 Down-leapeth and lasheth to tempest the face of the dark-blue deep.

Who then was the first, who then was the last, that Priam's seed,
 Even Hector, slew, when Zeus vouchsafed him the glory-meed? 300
 Asaius, Autonöus next, and Opites to Hades he sped;
 Agelaus, Opheltius, and Dolops Klytius' son lie dead;
 Aisymnus is slain, battle-bider Hipponöus, Orus withal:
 Even these of the Danaan chiefs; on their multitude now doth he fall.
 As the West-wind driveth in rout the host of the cloudy rack 305
 Of the dank South, smiting them hard with a tempest lurid-black,—
 Wave rolleth on mountain wave, and the scattering foam-crests high
 On the blasts of the wind wild-veering drift through the roaring sky;
 So drift they, the huddled crests, as his foes before Hector fly.
 Then had been havoc, and deeds had been done past helping then, 310
 And amidst of the galleys had fallen the fleeing Achaian men,
 But to lord Diomedes Odysseus cried through the rout and the roar:

"What aileth us, Tydeus' son, to remember our prowess no more?
 Ho, hither to me, friend!—stand by my side: it were bitter shame
 If the ships should be taken of Hector the lord of the helmet of flame!" 315

Then unto him made answer and spake Diomedes the strong :
“ I will verily stay and abide the battle ; howbeit not long
Shall we joy therein, forasmuch as the Cloudrack-king of the sky
Not unto us, but the Trojans, willeth the victory.”

He spake, and he hurled with his javelin, and cleft Thymbraius' heart, 320
And dashed him to earth from his car, the while of Odysseus' dart
Was Molion the charioteer of the slain king laid in the dust.
There left they the dead, having utterly quelled their battle-lust.
Then clashing and clanging they rushed through the rout, as wild boars twain
With dauntless-hardy hearts rush down on the hunters amain ; 325
So turned they to bay destroying their foes, and exceeding fain
The Achaians from Hector the godlike that fled drew breath again.
Then slew they two of the chiefs of the people whom one car bore,
Children of Merops the scer of Perkotè ; in prophecy-lore
Was he wisest of men, and he would not his sons should fare to the fray, 330
To the battle, destroyer of heroes ; howbeit they would not obey
Their father's behest, for the fates of black death drew them away.
Even them Diomedes the spear-renowned hath slain, and hath torn
Their glorious arms from the breath-bereft, from the life-forlorn.
Hippodamas now and Hypeirochus down by Odysseus are borne. 335

Then held Kronion the balance of battle with level sway,
Down-gazing from Ida, and ever on this side and that did they slay.
Then hero Agastrophus, offspring of Priam, was stabbed by the spear
Of Tydeus' son on the hip ; for he stayed not his horses anear
To flee from the battle at need, but his spirit was folly-distraught ; 340

For his henchman held them aloof, but himself mid the foremost fought

On-storming afoot, till his soul out of life into death he brought.

But Hector across the ranks keen-glancing, thitherward leapt

Shouting his war-cry : behind him the Trojan battalions swept.

Then saw Diomedes the battle-helper, and shuddered to see ; 345

And straightway he strode to Odysseus' side, and thus spake he :

“ Lo, thunderbolt Hector is on us, a rolling ruin-tide !

Come then, let us flinch not before him, his onset let us abide.” [sped,

He spake, and he swung up his long-shadowed spear, and the shaft he hath

And he smote him, and missed not the mark, for he hurled at Hector's head. 350

On the crest of the morion it lighted, but brass was foiled by brass,

That it reached not his flesh, forasmuch as it might not prevail to pass

Through the threefold plates of the helmet, the gift of Apollo's hand.

Far backward hath Hector reeled to the midst of his henchman-band ;

And he sank to his knees, upborne by his brawny hand on the ground, 355

And a mist and a blackness of night fell shrouding his eyes around.

But it was so, while Tydeus' son followed far through the forefront of fight

The leap of his lance, to the place where it stood in the earth deep-pight,

Then Hector again gat breath, and aback hath he leapt to his car,

And he plunged mid the host of his men, from the black death fleeing afar. 360

Then with his lance rushing onward did strong Diomedes cry :

“ Ha, thou hast fled from the death, thou dog !—but thy bane came nigh,

Full nigh thee ! 'Tis Phoebus Apollo again hath saved thee, I trow :

Of a surety thou prayest him, ere to the hurtling of lances thou go. [striven, 365

I will yet make an end of thee !—yea, we shall meet, and our strife shall be

If with me too haply a helper be found of the dwellers in heaven.
Now will I set on the rest, whosoe'er to mine hands shall be given."

He spake, and he fell to the spoiling of Paion's son spear-famed.
Then Alexander the lord of Helen the fair-tressed aimed
His arrow against that shepherd of folk, even Tydeus' child : 370
For against a pillar he leaned on the barrow a nation had piled
For Ilus, Dardanus' son, a prince of the olden day.
Now the hero from mighty Agastrophus' breast was tearing away
The corslet's gleaming sheen, and the shield from his shoulders he rent,
And the massy helmet : —but now was the bow to a deep arch bent, 375
And the arrow leapt forth : not in vain from the hand of the archer it flew,
On the flat of his right foot lighting, and pierced it through and through,
That it stood in the earth. Then loud laughed Paris in triumph-glee ;
Forth of his ambush he sprang, and with vaunting words spake he : [dart 380
"Thou art smitten !—not vainly mine arrow hath flown !—would God my
Had taken thy life away, deep-plunging into thine heart !
Then peradventure the Trojans had gotten some respite from bale,
Who tremble before thee, as bleating goats at a lion quail."

But undismayed Diomedes the strong made answer in scorn :
"Thou bow-churl railer, thou gazer at girls, who dost glory in horn, 385
If man against man in the harness of war thou wouldst try my might,
Naught should avail thee thy bow, nor the hail of the arrow-flight.
But now hast thou grazed but my foot, and thou vauntest in empty joy !
I reckon not : 'tis even as a woman should smite, or a witless boy.
A dastard, a niddering slave—tush, vain is the shaft of such ! 390

Not in such wise from mine hand, how lightly soever it touch,
The keen dart flieth, but straightway bereaveth a man of his life ;
And torn by her frenzied hands are the cheeks of his widowed wife,
And his children be fatherless : he with his blood red-staining the ground
Lieth to rot : more vultures than women about him be found.” 395

Then cometh and standeth before him Odysseus the spear-renowned :
And behind him he sat him adown, and the shaft keen-whetted he drew
From his foot, and with grievous pangs was the hero's flesh thrilled through.
And he sprang to his chariot, and bade his henchman to turn again
Unto the hollow ships, for his heart was sore in pain. 400

And Odysseus the spear-renowned was left alone : there was none
That abode by his side of the Argives, for fear had seized each one.
Sorely disquieted then to his own stout heart he said :

“ Ah me, what now shall befall me ?—ill were it done if I fled
Yon rabble in fear !—yet worse should it be alone to be taken. 405
Other Danaans flee, for their hearts by Kronion are panic-shaken.
Howbeit what do I, communing in this vile sort with mine heart ?
For I know that it is but the cowards that forth of the battle depart :
But whoso playeth the man in the fight must needs, I trow,
Unflinchingly stand, whether smitten he be, or have smitten his foe.” 410

In the thoughts and intents of his heart as he wavered doubtful-souled,
On came the Trojan shields, ever nearer the war-surge rolled ; [hold.
And they hemmed him around—but their bane thereby in their midst did they
As when stalwart hunters and hounds have encompassed a wild boar's lair,
Till, bursting out of the deep dark covert, behold, he is there 415

Whetting his gleaming tusks from his grinning jaws as they flash :
Forthright they beset him, and clear through the tumult the tusks' fierce clash
Ringeth, but stoutly they bide his terrible onset-dash ;
Even so did the Trojans beset Odysseus to Zeus most dear.
Then first upon Déiopites the princely he leapt with his spear, 420
And thrust with the keen brass down on his shoulder, and pierced it through.
Thereafter on Thoön and Ennomus swiftly he turned, and slew.
Thereafter Chersidamas, soon as he leapt from his car to the ground,
In the navel he stabbed with his spear 'neath his buckler's boss-starred round ;
And in agony clutching the earth with his palm was he rolled in the dust. 425
These left he to lie, and at Charops he smote with a swift spear-thrust,
The true blood-brother of Sokus the high-born, Hippasus' son.
Then came for his rescuing Sokus, a godlike-goodly one ;
And he drew full nigh to the hero, and hailed him in act to spoil :
 " Odysseus the famous in story, insatiate of guile and of toil, 430
Either to-day shalt thou vaunt thee o'er sons of Hippasus twain,
Of the laying of two such champions low, of their battle-gear ta'en,
Or shalt lose thy life peradventure by my spear smitten and slain."
At the round of his shapely shield a furious thrust hath he sped :
Crashed through the glittering buckler the great spear's thunderbolt head : 435
Unswerving it burst through the corslet with curious work rich-decked,
And all the flesh from his ribs hath it torn ; yet its fury was checked,
That it pierced not the hero's bowels, by Pallas Athénè's power.
And Odysseus knew that the end had found him not in that hour ;
And he drew back a step, and to Sokus he cried undaunted of cheer : 440

“Wretch, surely there cometh upon thee destruction sudden-sheer !
Of a truth hast thou wrought that in battle with Trojans no more I may stand ;
But for thee—I tell thee that slaughter and black death dealt by my hand
Shall be wreaked on thee here, and thou by my javelin dashed to the ground
Shalt give glory to me, and thy soul unto Hades the steed-renowned.” 445

He spake, and that other had turned him to flee in sudden fear ;
But even as he turned plunged into his back Odysseus’ spear
’Twixt shoulder and shoulder, and onward and out through his breast it brake.
Loud-crashing he fell, and Odysseus the godlike in triumph spake :

“Ha Sokus the war-wise horse-queller’s seed, thou Hippiasus’ son, 450
Thy swiftness might flee not the death-doom-end, nor thy wiliness shun !
Ah wretch, it is not thy sire, nor thy mother the lady fair,
That shall close thine eyes death-staring : raw-ravering fowl of the air [wings :
Shall rend thee, o’erglooming thy carcass with flap of their thick-thronging
But my pyre, if I die, shall be reared by Achaia’s heroes and kings.” 455

He spake, and thereafter the spear of the war-wise Sokus he drew
Forth of the flesh and the shield that the thunderbolt head cleft through.
Out spirted the blood as he drew it, and troubled his spirit sore.
But so soon as the great-heart Trojans beheld Odysseus’ gore,
Rang a shout through their ranks, and they closed on the hero on every side. 460
And Odysseus gave back from their onset, and loud to his comrades he cried :
Thrice did he shout, as loud as the throat of man might call :
Upon Arês-beloved Menelaus’ ear did his cry thrice fall.
Unto Aias forthright, as he fought by his side, Menelaus spoke :

“Telamonian Aias the Zeus-descended, captain of folk, 465

There hath rung through mine ears the steadfast-hearted Odysseus' shout ;
And suchlike it seemed unto me as the Trojans had hemmed him about,
And were pressing him hard alone in the mighty grapple of fight. [plight ;
Let us speed through the press : it were best that we helped our comrade's
For I fear lest mischief befall him alone mid the Trojan host, 470
Lest sore be the Danaans' grief for their valiant hero lost."

So spake he, and led, and followed him Aias, a godlike wight.
Then found they Odysseus, and pressed on him Trojans to left and to right,
As amidst of the mountains the tawny jackals close on a hart,
On a stately-antlered stag, sore hurt by the death-winged dart 475
From a hunter's bow ; yet his fleetness of foot hath availed him to flee
So long as his blood ran warm and the lithe limbs bounded free :
But when by the shaft that he cannot outrun his strength is spent,
In a mountain-forest dark have the wild dogs caught him and rent.
But lo, God bringeth a lion, a ravin-king, that way ; 480
Then scatter the jackals in dread, and the lion devoureth the prey ;
Even so that day on Odysseus the war-wise, the master of guile,
Trojans full many and stalwart pressed, and the hero the while
Rushing this way and that with his spear thrust backward the pitiless hour.
Lo, nigh to him Aias came, on-bearing the shield like a tower, 485
And stood by him : scattered the Trojans this way and that way in dread.
Then grasped Menelaus his hand, and forth of the press hath he led,
Till his henchman-charioteer came driving the steeds to his side.
But Aias hath leapt on the Trojans, and straightway Doryklus died,
A bastard begotten of Priam : through Pandokus' heart hath he thrust : 490

Lysander and Pyrasus stabbed he ; Pylartes he laid in the dust.
 And as when some river in flood goeth pouring adown to the plain
 From the mountains, a winter-torrent swelled by the heaven-sent rain,
 And many a sapless oak, and many a tall pine-tree
 Down the whirl of its waters is hurled as it sweepeth the silt to the sea ; 495
 So Aias the glorious then went chasing the rout of the foe
 O'er the plain, slaying horses and men : but nothing did Hector know
 Thereof, forasmuch as he fought on the left of the warring host,
 By the banks of the river Skamander, for there was the havoc most
 As men's heads fell, and the shouting as fire unquenchable rose 500
 Round Nestor the mighty and dauntless Idomeneus grappling with foes.
 In the heart of the battle was Hector, and dread were his mighty deeds
 As he wasted the ranks with his spear and the charge of his chariot-steeds.
 Yet had the godlike Achaians still pressed Ilium-ward,
 Had not the prince Alexander, the fair-tressed Helen's lord, 505
 At Machaon the war-chief's shieldless shoulder speeding the flight
 Of a three-barbed arrow, stayed him amidst of the triumph of fight.
 Then sorely they feared for his sake, the Achaians breathing might,
 Lest a captive he fall mid the foes in the turning of battle's tide.
 Forthright thereupon unto Nestor the godlike Idomeneus cried : 510
 " O Nestor Neleus' son, Achaia's crown of pride,
 Up, get thee upon thy car ; let Machaon mount at thy side :
 And thy thunderfoot horses drive to the ships with thine uttermost speed ;
 For more than a multitude availeth the leech for our need, [515
 When the shaft sticketh deep in the flesh, when the healing salve must be spread."

Then hearkened Gerenia's horseman Nestor to do as he said.
He hath mounted his chariot, and onward bearing Machaon it rolled,
The son of Asklēpius the leech, the glorious healer of old.
And he lashed those coursers fleet, and with eager speed they flew
To the hollow ships—yea, fain was their spirit so to do. 520
Then ware was Kebrionēs of the rout of the Trojan folk,
As in Hector's chariot he rode, and with eager lips he spoke :
 “ Lo Hector, here be we rifting the Danaan ranks asunder
On the skirts of the hideous-yelling fight, but the Trojans yonder
Are hurled in confusion of rout, both hero and battle-car, 525
By Aias Telamon's son : well know I the man from afar
By the shoulders that bear the broad tower-shield :—nay then, let us turn
Thither the steeds and the car where most doth the war-rage burn
Of chariot-fighters and footmen hurling their hate at their foes
As they slay, while as quenchless flame the roar of it heavenward goes.” 530
Then the car-steeds beautiful-maned with the whistling thong he lashed,
And they hearkened the voice of the scourge, and away and away they dashed
To the strife of Achaian and Trojan speeding the rushing car,
Trampling the corpses and shields, and with blood was the axle-bar
All spattered beneath, and blood on the rails of the chariot rained, 535
Upsplashed from the crimson pools as the thundering hoofs on-strained,
Whirled wide from the madding tires. On rushed he battle-athirst
To leap mid the ranks and to rend them : with ruinous tumult he burst
On the Danaans : nowise by dread of the spear was his onrush barred.
On went the hero through ranks of the foemen, and ever he warred 540

With the lightning of spears, with the flame of the sword, with the huge rock-
Only from battle he shrank with Aias Telamon's son, [shard.
For that Zeus had been angered if Hector had fought with a mightier one.

But Allfather enthroned on high made Aias panic-stung.
Astonied he stood, and behind him the sevenfold shield he flung : 545
And he quailed as he glanced at the war-press, and like to a beast at bay
To this side and that side he turned him, and foot by foot gave way.
And even as the herdmen-folk and the watch-dogs drive from the fold,
From the garth of the kine, a tawny lion ravin-bold,
As they watch through the livelong night, neither suffer the forest-king 550
To seize on the choice of the herd, but for flesh mad-hungering
Ever on them he rusheth, yet naught he prevaieth, so thick and fast
Leap in his face the darts by the hands undaunted cast,
And the blazing brands that he dreadeth, how furious-fain soe'er,
Till at dawn sore chafing and grudging in spirit aback must he fare ; 555
So chafing at heart from the Trojans Aias backward bore
Bitterly loth, for he feared for Achaia's ships full sore.
And as when by a cornfield faring an ass, upon whose dull hide
Many staves have been broken, o'ermastereth boys that would turn him aside,
And he entereth in, and he wasteth the crop, while the children smite 560
The spoiler with cudgels, but nothing availeth their puny might,
And hardly when stayed is his craving for corn may they drive him away ;
Even so upon Aias the mighty, Telamon's son, that day
Did Troy's proud sons and their helpers from many a nation charge, [565
Evermore, as they pressed on him, stabbing with lances the midst of his targe.

And in Aias now did the war-wrath-flame rekindling leap,
 And he turned him and stayed the battalions amidst of the onset-sweep
 Of the horse-quelling foe : now flightward again would he turn his feet ;
 Yet, fight he or flee, he barred the path of their host to the fleet.
 Even there 'twixt the ranks of Achaia and Troy did the hero stand 570
 Furious-battling, and spears from many a valiant hand
 Plunged into the broad shield some, as onward they leapt amain,
 And into the earth sank many, or ever their flight might attain
 The goal of his flesh, and they quivered athirst for the blood of the slain.

But Eurypylus, glorious son of Evainon, beheld that sight, 575
 How the hero with thick-coming darts sore pressed was in evil plight :
 And he came and he stood by his side, and he hurled with his lance flame-
 Upon Phausias' son Apisaon, a shepherd of folk, did it light, [bright ;
 In his liver, the midriff beneath, and unstrung was his strength by the spear.
 And Eurypylus rushed to strip from his shoulders his battle-gear. 580
 But when prince Alexander the godlike beheld him in act to strip
 From dead Apisaon his mail, then strained he his bow in his grip
 On Eurypylus : swift to his rightward thigh did the arrow fly :
 And the reed snapped off, but a bitter burden abode in his thigh. [585
 Straightway to the band of his comrades he drew back, shunning the death,
 And he shouteth with far-ringing voice to the Danaan men, and he saith :

“ Friends, princes of Argive men, and chiefs of their war-array,
 Turn you about and stand, and defend from the pitiless day
 Aias, for now is he sorely bestead with the darts, and I trow
 He will flee not the deadly din of the fight :—stand firmly, ho, 590

For the rescue of Aias the mighty, Telamon's son, from the foe ! ”

So cried Eurypylus arrow-smitten, and they at his shout
Cast on their shoulders their shields, and they compassed the hero about,
Outstretching their spears. Then Aias to meet his comrades strode,
And he turned him about in their midst, and the battle of Troy he abode. 595
So with the ravening fury of blazing fire fought they.

But Nestor the mares Neleian sweating bare from the fray,
And Machaon the shepherd of folk therewithal sped they in the car.
Then fleetfoot Achilles the godlike was ware of him, looking from far.
For he stood on the huge dark bulk of his ship, on the stern high-raised, 600
And over the desperate toil and the woe-fraught strife he gazed.
And unto his comrade Patroclus straightway his voice hath he sent
From his ship far-shouting, and heard him Patroclus, and forth of his tent
Came, like to the War-god :—his bane in the selfsame hour was begun.

Then first to the hero spake Menoitius' stalwart son : 605

“ Why dost thou call me, Achilles, and what wouldst thou have me to do ? ”
Made answer Achilles the swift to his comrade tried and true :

“ Menoitius' godlike son, right dear to the heart of me,
Now the Achaians, I ween, beseeching shall crouch at my knee ;
For a mighty constraint that may not be withstood is come on them now. 610
Go, prithee, Patroclus the Zeus-loved, of Nestor question thou
Who shall it be that he beareth stricken from battle-wrack,
Of a truth as Machaon he seemed unto me that beheld but his back,
Even Asklêpius' son, but I saw not the face of the man,
For the steeds flashed past in a moment as onward-straining they ran.” 615

He spake, and the word of his dear-loved friend did Patroclus obey,
And he hasted and ran to the tents and the ships of Achaia's array.
Now when they to the tent of Neleus' son were come from the war,
On the earth's all-fostering floor they lighted down from the car ;
And the steeds of the ancient hero Eurymedon led aside 620
From the yoke, and the sweat of their toil from their tunics the warriors dried,
As they stood in the breeze by the shore of the sea : thereafter they hied
Into the tent, and on seats did they sit them adown to rest.
Then mixed them a summer-draught Hekamèdè the lovely-tressed,
Whom the ancient received when Achilles smote strong Tenedos' wall, 625
The child of Arsinoüs mighty of heart ; that war-won thrall
The Achaians gave unto him who in counsel was chiefest of all.
So in front of the heroes a beautiful table first did she place,
With its feet of the cyanus wrought, fair-burnished : a basket of brass
Did she set, and a scallion to blend with the wine, sharp savour with sweet, 630
And amber honey she served, and the hallowed meal of the wheat ;
And a beautiful cup from the old king's palace-treasure-store,
With golden bosses bestarred, and the ears thereof were four.
Two golden doves bent over the brim upon either hand
Of each, as to sip of the bowl, and beneath was a twofold stand. 635
That mighty mazer another would strain from the table to shift
Wine-brimmed, which Nestor the old would with effortless strength uplift.
So the woman fair as a goddess mixed them the draught, and she stirred
The Pramnian wine therein, and she grated the goat's milk curd
With a brazen grater, and sprinkled thereover the barley white, 640

And she bade them to drink, so soon as the draught was ready-dight.
So when they had drunken thereof the fire of their thirst to slake,
Then took they delight of discourse as each unto other they spake.
And behold, at the tent-door stood Patroclus, a godlike wight ;
And the ancient beheld, and he sprang from the high-seat glittering-bright. 645
And he drew him within by the hand, and unto a chair would have led,
Howbeit Patroclus spake the word of denial, and said :

“ No sitting for me, Zeus-fostered ancient ; thou shalt not prevail.
He is worship-worthy and dread who hath sent me to hear the tale
Of the shaft-stricken hero thou bring'st,—yet his name needeth not to be told ;
For this is Machaon the shepherd of folk that mine eyes behold. [650
But now to Achilles with tidings hereof must I straightway return.
Thou knowest full well, Zeus-fostered sire, how terribly stern
Is the hero : he would not spare to upbraid where blame was none.”

Answered him Nestor, Gerenia's chariot-lord spake on : 655
“ And why doth Achilles pity the sons of Achaia so,
Even such of our host as be smitten with darts ?—what, doth he not know
What grief hath arisen throughout our array ?—for our mightiest here
Mid the galleys are lying with arrows smitten, or stabbed with the spear.
Strong Tydeus' son Diomedes is hurt by a shaft from the string, 660
Spear-stabbed is Odysseus the lance-famed, and Agamemnon the king :
On the thigh is Eurypylus smitten withal by an arrow's flight ;
And another, this man, but now have I brought from the midst of the fight
Hurt by a shaft from the cord. But Achilles, for all his might,
Not for the Danaans careth, nor pitieth he their plight. 665

What, will he wait till the sea-swift ships on the wave-washed coast
Be aglow with the ravening fire in despite of the Danaan host,
And slaughtered one on another we fall?—for my strength no more
Is like unto that which my lithe limbs had in the days of yore.
Ah that I had but my youth, and my strength unwasted as then 670
When rose grim feud 'twixt the folk of my country and Elis' men
For a cattle-foray, when stricken Itymoneus fell by my hand,
Hypeirochus' stalwart son, the abider in Elis-land,
When I drave the spoil, and he, as he stood in defence of his kine,
Mid the foremost was struck by a lance from this right hand of mine : 675
Down fell he, and trembled the yeomen-folk in sore dismay.
Then forth of their plain did we gather and drive a mighty prey,
Even fifty herds of their kine, and as many flocks of their sheep,
And fifty of swine and of goats from the harried plain did we sweep,
And chestnut steeds therewithal a hundred and fifty we won ; 680
There were none but were mares, and by many an one did a young foal run.
These drave we in triumph through Nelian Pylos' gate in the night,
And on to the citadel : stirred was Neleus' soul with delight
For the great spoil won by his son at his first going forth unto war.
And at dawning the heralds proclaimed with clear voice pealing afar 685
That all men should come that of Elis the hallowed had claim of a debt.
Thereafter gathered the chieftains, the lords of the Pylians met,
And they parted the spoil, for to many a debt the Epeians owed,
Who had evil-entreated us, the few that in Pylos abode.
For Herakles' might had come down on our people, and grimly oppressed 690

The land in the years overpast, and slain were our bravest and best.
Twelve sons were we, unto Neleus the princely born in his hall :
I only was left, for in battle did all my brethren fall.
And pride-uplifted thereby the Epeians brass-mail-dight
Wrought tyrannous wrong, and devised for us deeds of mischief and spite. 695
And the old king chose him a herd of kine, and a mighty flock
Of sheep ; three hundred he took, and with these their shepherd-folk.
For to him out of Elis the hallowed a debt full heavy was due,
Four guerdon-winning steeds, and the chariot withal that they drew, [700
When for prizes they came, when their lord for a tripod had sent them to race :
Howbeit Augeias, the king of men, in the selfsame place
Seized them, and sent their driver away sore grieved for his steeds.
And the old king, bitterly wroth for spiteful words and deeds,
Chose for him booty untold, but the rest to his people he left
To divide it, that none might upbraid, of his rightful portion bereft. 705
So meetly we ordered it all, and about our burg did we slay
Gifts to the Gods : then came, when the third dawn brought the day,
The host of our foes and their thunderfoot horses in full array :
And amidst them the twin Molions were girded with harness of fight,
But as yet were they striplings, and skilless as yet of battle-might. 710
Now a city there is, Thryoessa, a crag-built burg of war ;
On the marches of Pylos the sandy it stood by Alpheius afar.
Round about it they camped, mad-eager to rase that war-fenced town.
But when they had marched through the plain, from Olympus rushing down
Came Athênê by night, bidding arm us to meet that peril nigh ; 715

And nowise loth were our folk when she cried the gathering cry,
But exceeding fain of the battle were they : yet Neleus denied
That his son should array him for fight, and my chariot-steeds did he hide,
For he deemed that in wisdom of war as yet was I over-young ;
But for all this, glory I won mid our car-borne warrior-throng, 720
Albeit on foot, for the battle was swayed of Athênè so.
Now a river there is, Minycius, and down to the sea doth it go
Anigh to Arênè, and there the Dawn divine we abode
With the chariots of Pylos, while onward the war-flood of footmen flowed.
Then with our gathered array, full-harnessed in brazen gleam, 725
We came when the sun was high to Alpheius' sacred stream.
There unto might-throned Zeus fair victims slaughtered we,
And a bull to Alpheius, a bull to Poseidon the Lord of the Sea ;
But a heifer to Queen Athênè the flashing-eyed did we slay. [730
Then squadron by squadron we supped in the place where the war-host lay ;
And armour-sheathed we slept by the river whose waters rolled
Murmuring by, the while the Epeians mighty-souled
Beleaguered the town, mad-eager to lay her ramparts low :
But a mighty deed of war ere then was revealed to the foe :
For so soon as over the earth-plain the sun uplifted his light, 735
Unto Zeus we prayed and Athênè, and clashed in the thunder of fight.
And scarce was the strife of the Pylian men and Epeians begun,
When I smote down the first of the foe, and his thunderfoot horses I won,
Even Mulius the spearman : by marriage was he to Augeias allied,
Whose eldest child Agamêdè the golden-haired was his bride ; 740

All herbs of healing she knew that be nursed on the earth-plain wide.
 On came he—I sped to his heart the brazen lance's flight.
 Down fell he in dust, and I on his chariot sprang forthright ;
 And I stood mid the forefighters. Then the Epeian men of renown
 Quaked in confusion of panic, beholding him stricken down, 745
 The chieftain of chariots, their champion, their stay mid the battle-wrack.
 Then I charged on the foe with the sweep of the hurricane lurid-black,
 And fifty chariots I took, and from each car heroes twain
 Rolled gnashing their teeth in the dust of death, by my war-spear slain.
 Yea, the Molions of Aktor's line by mine hand had died, 750
 But the Wide-dominioned, who shaketh the earth with his thunder-tide,
 Their father, snatched them from war, and in deep mist veiled them from sight.
 Then Zeus to the Pylian men vouchsafed the victory-might.
 Onward and onward we chased their rout through the plain wide-spread,
 Slaying the men, and spoiling the fair war-gear of the dead, 755
 Till over Buprasion's lea wheat-wealthy the war-waves flowed,
 Till to Olenus' rock and Aleision's tower-crowned crag we rode.
 There backward Athênê turned our host on the homeward way :
 There slew I, there left I, the last of the foe : but Achaia's array
 From Buprasion to Pylos drave their steeds swift-footed again ; 760
 And of Godfolk 'twas Zeus that they praised, it was Nestor they praised among
 Such was I, if ever I lived, among men. But Achilles will reap [men.
 The fruit of his prowess alone : ah surely, I ween, shall he weep
 Sorely with ruth for the folk when they perish utterly.
 O friend, of a truth did Menoitius lay this charge upon thee, 765

In the day when from Phthia he sent thee for King Agamemnon's feud,
And Odysseus the godlike and I 'neath the selfsame roof-tree stood,
As he spake in his halls, and we hearkened to all his charging the while :—
For we came unto Peleus' palace, the stately-built pile,
As we gathered the host through Achaia the land of women fair. 770
So we came to his halls, and the hero Menoitius found we there,
And thee with Achilles. And Peleus the chariot-champion grey
Unto Zeus the thunder-triumphant was burning the thighs that day
Of kine in the garth of his court, and a chalice of gold he bore,
And thereout on the altar-blaze the flame-flushed wine did he pour. 775
Ye twain were dividing the carcase : and over the threshold we stept,
And we stood in the door : to his feet in amazement Achilles leapt.
Then grasped he our hands, and he led us within, and he bade to a seat,
And he set before us the guest-fare, whatso for strangers is meet.
But so soon as our souls were filled with delight of the wine and the roast, 780
I spake of our counsel, and prayed you to follow to war with the host.
Full fain were ye then, and your fathers charged you with earnest heed :
Yea, Peleus the ancient charged Achilles his hero-seed
Ever upward to strive to the highest, and still to be best of the best :
And to thee Menoitius Aktor's son gave thus his behest : 785
 'My son, of his lineage Achilles is sprung of the princelier line,
But thou art the elder-born : yet his prowess is far above thine.
Then speak to him words of wisdom, and whisper his stormier mood,
And point him the way he should go : he will hearken to thee for his good.'
So counselled the ancient, but ah, thou forgettest : yet now, even now, 790

To Achilles the wise, if he haply will hear thee, thus speak thou.
 Who can tell but his heart shall awaken, that God will cause him to heed
 Thy pleading?—a blessing there is when the lips of the loving plead.
 But and if 'tis a prophecy haunteth his soul with a vision of fear,
 If his mother have told some fateful warning of Zeus in his ear, 795
 Yet thee at the least let him send : let his Myrmidon ranks to the war
 Follow thee ; so shalt thou rise on our host a deliverance-star.
 Yea, let him give thee his goodly harness to bear to the fray,
 Peradventure the Trojans will deem thou art he, and will shrink in dismay
 From the fight, and a breathing-space to Achaians sore distress 800
 Shall be given, for short is the time in the battle for breathing or rest ;
 And ye, the unwearied, might drive the foe with the war-toil spent
 Lightly aback to the city afar from galley and tent."

So spake he, and stirred was the heart in Patroclus' breast by his rede,
 And he turned him to run to the ships, to Achilles Aiakus' seed: 805
 But when to the ships he was come of Odysseus the godlike king,
 As he ran, to the place of the council-stead and the judgment-ring,
 Where the altars stood, by Achaians reared to the dwellers on high,
 There met him Eurypylus, offspring of Zeus, as he passed thereby.
 Smit with a shaft in the thigh slow came Evaimon's son 810
 Halting from battle, and down did the sweat of his labour run
 Streaming from shoulders and head, and forth of the grim gash flowed
 The blood dark-welling, howbeit his mind unshaken abode.
 And Menoitius' stalwart son beheld him pity-stirred,
 And he made lamentation thereover, and spake the swift-winged word : 815

“ Ah hapless men, ye princes and chiefs of the Danaan war !
How are ye doomed, far off from your friends and your fatherland-shore,
With the fat of the mighty to glut swift hounds, before Troy as ye lie !
Come, Hero Eurypylus, fostered of Zeus, to mine asking reply—
Shall the men of Achaia yet make Hector the giant refrain, 820
Or perish in this same hour by his spear overmastered and slain ? ”

Unto him did Eurypylus prudent in spirit answering say :
“ No longer, Patroclus the Zeus-born, shall any battle-stay
For Achaians be found, but amidst of their dark-hulled ships shall they fall.
For they that in days overpast were our mightiest, even they all, 825
Shaft-smitten or stabbed, mid the galleys are lying, wounded sore
By the hands of the Trojans, and waxeth the might of the foe evermore.
But be thou my deliverer : unto my black ship help me hence, [cleanse
And cut thou the shaft from my thigh, and with warm streams thence do thou
The black-clotted gore, and salves pain-soothing thereon do thou lay, 830
Those precious balms the which thou hast learnt of Achilles, they say.
Whom Cheiron the Centaur, the peerless in righteousness, wont to teach.
For Machaon and Podaleirius, cunning in craft of the leech—
Of these mid the tents lieth one, with his strength by a wound brought low,
And himself of the hand of the healer is sorely in need, I trow : 835
In the plain yet bideth the other the fierce war-wrath of the foe.”

And Menoitius' stalwart son made answer thereunto :
“ But how shall the thing be accomplished ?—Eurypylus, how shall we do ?
Even now to Achilles the war-wise bearing a message I speed,
With the word of Achaia's warder, Gerenian Nestor's rede :— 840

Yet not even so will I leave thee alone in thy grievous need."

He spake, and beneath the breast did he clasp that chieftain, and led
To his tent, and the skins of kine on the ground did a henchman spread.
So Patroclus laid him thereon, and he cut from the thigh with his sword
The cruel-keen shaft, and over the gash warm water he poured, 845
Cleansing the gore, and a bitter, a pain-slaying root hath he laid,
Bruised in his hands, thereon, and an utter end hath it made
Of his pangs, and the wound 'gan dry, and the flow of his blood was stayed.

BOOK XII.

Of the rampart-storming, till Hector bursteth the gates asunder.

IN suchwise amidst of the tents Menoitius' stalwart son
Was healing Eurypylus arrow-stricken : but still fought on
Argives and Trojans in grappling battalions, nor long was it doomed
That the moat of the Danaan men, by the broad wall's frown overgloomed,
Should defend them, the which they had made for a shield to the ships, and had
The trench-line round, but hecatombs none to the Gods had they given, [driven 5
That they and their sea-swift ships, and the wealth of their war-won prey
Might be safe therewithin : in despite of the Gods that abide for aye
Was it builded : for this cause short was the time that unmarred it abode.
While Hector yet was alive, and Achilles' wrath-flame glowed, 10
And the city of Priam the King yet stood unwasted of foes,
So long unruined Achaia's stately rampart rose.
But when Troytown's mightiest children of light and of life were bereft,
And many an Argive was death-overborne, and a remnant was left,
And Priam's town in the tenth of the years in ruin fell, 15

And the Argives were gone to their fatherland over the broad sea-swell,
Then did Poseidon the Lord of the Sea and Apollo take thought
To waste that rampart, and thither the strength of the rivers they brought,
Even all that from Ida's heights down-hurrying seaward fall,
Rhesus and Heptaporus and Karêsus and Rhodius withal, 20
Grênikus, Aisêpus, Skamander withal, that flood of renown,
And Simois stream, whereby there had fallen in dust stricken down
Shields many, and helms, and the corpses of men of a godlike race.
The mouths of them all did Apollo turn to the selfsame place.
Nine days did he hurl at the rampart their floods, and Zeus the while 25
Rained ever, the sooner to whelm in the sea that mighty pile :
And the Earth-shaker's self with his trident in hand afront of them went,
And all the foundations thereof adown the waves he sent,
Where the toiling Achaians had laid them with massy stone and beam :
And he levelled and made all smooth by broad-flowing Hellespont's stream ; 30
And again did he cover the wide-spread beach with the tokenless sand, [hand,
When the rampart was scattered, and backward the rivers were turned by his
That their fair-flowing waters might murmur again as of old through the land.
So was Poseidon to work his will in the coming day
With Apollo :—but then was the roar of the onset, the flame of the fray, 35
By the giant rampart, and ever the beams of the towers rang loud
'Neath the blows, and the Argives now by the scourge of Zeus were cowed,
That amidst of the hollow ships were they penned, and sorely bestead,
From Hector the mighty, the panic-waster, shrinking adread,
While he fought like a tempest in stormy fury, even as before. 40

And as when in the midst of the hounds and the ring of the hunters a boar
Or a lion raging in strength turneth this way and that at bay,
While closeth around like a fortress-wall his foes' array
Fronting him still, while thick and fast from the strong hands dart
The javelins, howbeit not once doth his dauntless-haughty heart 45
Falter nor fail him, whom yet that aweless courage shall slay :
Ofttimes he turneth about, that hedge of the spears to essay,
And whithersoever he turneth, the ranks of men give way ;
So Hector cried on his war-fellows, rushing from rank to rank,
Ever cheering them on to pass that trench. But his fleet steeds shrank 50
From the terrible leap, and with quivering limbs they stood and neighed,
Wildly they neighed on the brink, for the broad moat made them afraid.
Yea, sooth was it nowise easy to cross nor to overleap,
For that all adown its length banks dark-overhanging and steep
Rose upon either hand, and above was the grim palisade 55
Of the sharp stakes set, for a fence by the sons of Achaia arrayed :
Close-ranged were they, great withal, the onset of foemen to bar ;
Thereby not lightly a steed, as he strained at the swift-wheeled car,
Might enter, howbeit the footmen were fain to accomplish the deed.
Then Polydamas came unto Hector the valiant, and uttered his rede : 60
 " Hector, and all ye captains of Troy and her warrior-aid,
To drive swift steeds through the trench were a deed but in madness essayed :
Hard is it, hard to be passed, for therein do the sharp stakes stand,
And beyond them riseth the wall of the sons of Achaia-land.
No chariot might plunge to its depths, that the riders should fight therein, 65

For strait is the space : 'tis a pit of wounds and of death, I ween.
Now if Zeus high-thundering goeth about to destroy this day
Our foes in his wrath, and is minded to succour the Trojan array,
Of a truth I were fain that their doom in an instant should suddenly come,
That here the Achaians renownless should perish afar from their home. 70
But and if they shall rally, and if from the ships they shall turn them about,
And into the deep-delved trench we shall fall in confusion of rout,
Never more shall so much as a messenger win back thence, I trow,
To tell in the city how rallied Achaia against her foe.
But come now, as I shall counsel, so let us all obey : 75
Our steeds on the brink of the trench let our chariot-henchmen stay ;
In our harness on foot let us follow the battle-rifting stride
Of Hector, shoulder to shoulder : our charge will they nowise abide,
If the meshes of doom be indeed drawn about them on every side."
Then good was Polydamas' prudent counsel in Hector's sight : 80
Straightway he leapt from his chariot to earth in his war-gear dight.
Yea, nor abode the rest of the Trojans in chariot-throng,
But as one man earthward they sprang, seeing Hector the godlike-strong.
Then to the charioteers each chieftain gave command
To range in order the steeds by the trench, and to have them in hand. 85
Then they marshalled them, squadron from squadron parted to left and to right,
And arrayed in battalions five they followed their chiefs to the fight.
With Hector the one troop went, with Polydamas' princely form,
The most and the bravest were these, and the battle's fury-storm
Raged in them to burst through the rampart, and over the galleys to swarm. 90

And with these twain Kebrionés pressed on : but with Hector's steeds
 Was there left one worser than Kebrionés in warrior-deeds.
 With Alkathous, Paris, Agénor, the second the war-path trod :
 And Helenus captained the third, and Delphobus fair as a God,
 Two children of Priam : with Asius led they the host to the war, 95
 Asius Hyrtakus' son : from Arisbé swept with his car
 Great horses with coats like flame, from the stream of Selléis afar.
 With the valiant son of Anchises the fourth troop battieward hied,
 With Aeneas ; Antenor's children twain pressed on at his side,
 Akamas and Archelochus hight, in all war-cunning wise. 100
 And Sarpedon led to the onset the battle-renowned allies :
 And he chose for his helpers Glaukus and Asteropaius the strong,
 Forasmuch as in prowess he counted them peerless the host among
 Next unto himself, who was matchless mid all Troy's warrior-aid. [105
 So when these, of their war-fellows holpen, with bull-hide shields were arrayed,
 On the Danaans charged they : they deemed that their might should be stayed
 Till down on the dark-hulled galleys in onset triumphant they bore. [nevermore
 Now the rest of the children of Troy and her helpers from far away
 Hearken Polydamas' rede, and the wise man's word they obey :
 But nowise would Asius Hyrtakus' son to his counsel give ear 110
 To leave by the trench his steeds and his henchman-charioteer ;
 But on for the sea-swift ships high-borne on his car swept he ;
 Fool !—for it was not his weird from the blackness of doom to flee,
 Nor with chariot and horses aback from the galleys in triumph-joy
 Returning again to win to the towers of windy Troy : 115

Ere then did a fate full ghastly enshroud him in utter gloom
When the spear of Deukalion's scion Idomeneus dealt him his doom.
On to the leftward flank of the galleys he charged amain
Unto where the Achaians with horses and chariots returned from the plain.
Thitherward drave he his thunderfoot steeds and his battle-car : 120
And he found not the door-leaves shut, neither gript by the massy bar.
For the men stood holding the gates of refuge wide, till the last
Of them from the battle that fled to the ships therethrough should have passed.
Thitherward drave he his horses unswerving, and followed the roar [125
Of his men wild-cheering behind him : they deemed that their foes nevermore
Should withstand them till down on the galleys in onset triumphant they bore.
Ah fools!—for keeping the gates they found two mightiest ones,
Even the Lapithan spearmen's haughty-hearted sons ;
The one was Peirithoüs' son, Polypoites the mighty of limb,
And Leonteus the other, like unto Arês the murder-grim. 130
There stood they in front of the high gates keeping the narrow way :
As oak-trees lofty-crested on mountain-heights stood they,
Like the forest-kings that abide evermore the wind and the rain
With their far-spreading roots firm-braced against the stormy strain ; [135
So they in the thews of their hands putting trust, and in pride of their might,
Abode the oncoming of Asius the giant, and thought not of flight.
Onward against that huge-built rampart, uplifting on high
Their bull-hide bucklers, they charged with the roar of the battle-cry.
With Iamenus, Asius their king, and Orestes they rushed on the wall,
And with Adamas, Asius' son, with Oinomaus, Thoön withal. 140

Now the twain for a space were within, and they kindled the mail-clad host
Of the sons of Achaia to fight for the ships, that they should not be lost.
But when they were ware how charged on the rampart the on-rushing foes,
And a shriek and a quaking of panic amidst the Danaans rose,
Forth rushed those twain, and in front of the gateway they battled then, 145
Like unto fierce wild boars that in some lone mountain-glen
Unquailing abide the oncoming tumult of hunter and hound ;
Forth spring they with sidelong rush, and the saplings crash all round
Snapped short at the roots, and rings out sharp through the din of the strife
The clash of the tusks, till the darts smite out each monster's life ; 150
Even so on the breasts of the champions rang the brass flame-bright
As the darts rained down, for in dauntless-desperate wise did they fight :
Putting trust in their friends on the wall and the might of their hands they strove,
For their war-fellows hurled down stones from the huge-built towers above,
Beating back from themselves and their tents and their sea-swift galleys the foe.
And even as down to the earth come falling the flakes of the snow [155
Which the wild wind, driving the dark cloud-rack with the scourge of its blast,
On the all-sustaining earth down-poureth thick and fast,
So poured from their hands the darts by the sons of Achaia cast
And the children of Troy, and ever the helmets harshly rang 160
By the rock-shards smitten, and still did the boss-starred bucklers clang.
Then wailed aloud and smote with a passionate hand on his thigh
Asius Hyrtakus' son, and he cried an indignant cry :
"Allfather, thou of a truth art a God that lovest a lie !
Yea, for I said in mine heart that Achaia's warrior-bands 165

Should withstand not our fury of onset, nor stay our resistless hands.
But these, as the wasps lithe-waisted, or bees that make their abode
In the clefts of the rock by the side of a rugged mountain-road
Forsake not their caverned halls, but stubbornly ever stay,
From their young ones essaying to chase the hunter-folk away, 170
Even so these men from the gates, albeit they are but twain,
Will nowise give back, or ever they slay or be smitten and slain."

So cried he, but not to his crying the spirit of Zeus gave heed,
For that steadfast his will was to give unto Hector the glory-meed.
But the others the while at the several gates grim battle fought : 175
Hard were it for me as a God to tell of the deeds there wrought.
All down the wall roared up as the flame of a furnace-fire
The storm of the stones : and the Argives, albeit in anguish dire,
Must needs fight on for the galleys, and grieved were the Gods, even they
Who would fain be the battle-shield of the Danaan war-array. 180
And ever the Lapithae clashed in the onset, and crashed through the fray.
Then Polypoites the stalwart, the son of Peirithoüs, cast,
And his spear through the brazen-plated helmet of Damasus passed,
Neither stayed it the brass of the morion, but onward the lance-point went,
And it burst through the bones of the skull, and within all blood-besprent 185
Was his brain : so he laid him low though never so battle-fain.
Thereafter did Ormenus fall, and Pylon the giant hath slain.
And Leonteus the scion of Arês hurled at Antimachus' son,
Hippomachus : swift to his baldric unswerving the spear flew on.
From the scabbard thereafter his war-glaive keen that champion swept, 190

And against Antiphates first through the throng of the battle he leapt.
And he caught him, and smote him, and backward to earth that corpse he threw ;
Thereafter Iamenus, Menon withal, and Orestes he slew ;
One after other their bodies on all-mother earth did he strew.

While these were spoiling the slain of their harness glittering-bright, 195
With Polydamas still and with Hector the war-host charged to the fight,
Even they that were bravest and most, and their souls were aflame with desire
To burst through the wall, and to burn the galleys with ravening fire.
Yet still did they tarry in wavering doubt on the brink of the fosse ;
For an omen-fowl had appeared as they rushed mad-eager to cross ; 200
For skirting the left of the host did an eagle towering soar,
And a serpent, a blood-red monster, clutched in his talons he bore,
Yet living and struggling, and still was its battle-delight unquelled,
For backward it writhed, while yet in the grip of his claws it was held :
On the breast by the neck did it smite him, and earthward he cast the prey, 205
Agony-thrilled, and amidst of the throng of the Trojans it lay,
And adown the blasts of the wind he darted with one wild scream.
Then shuddered the Trojans, beholding the serpent's writhing gleam
In the midst of them lying, the portent of Zeus the Aegis-lord.
And to Hector the valiant Polydamas strode with a bodeful word : 210

“ Hector, amidst the assembly thou sharply rebukest me still,
Yea, though I counsel aright ;—good sooth, thou accountest it ill
If a man of the people shall cross thee in war or in council-ring,
But we needs must exalt thy might above all questioning.
Yet from that which I deem shall be best will I nowise refrain my lips :— 215

Press we not onward to fight with the Danaan men for their ships :
For thus shall the end be, I trow, if indeed unto Troy's war-host
This augury-fowl hath appeared when fain were their hearts to have crossed,—
This eagle, the heavenward-soarer, to left of our army that sped,
While gripped in his talons he bare a monstrous snake blood-red, 220
Alive, yet he suddenly dropped it or ever his eyry he won,
And prevailed not to bear to his eaglets and give them to feast thereon ;—
So we, what though through the gates and the rampart Achaian we burst,
With might overmastering, though the Achaians give ground at the first,
Yet in wild disarray shall we flee from the ships by the selfsame way, 225
And shall leave full many a Trojan behind, whom the foemen shall slay
With the flash of the lightning of brass, defending their ships as they fight.
Yea, thus would a soothsayer tell us, whose heart could interpret aright
The god-sent marvels, a man unto whom the folk should obey.”

Then darkly-frowning did Hector the splendour-morioned say : 230
“ Polydamas, not as a friend unto me dost thou speak this day !
Thou lackest not wit for devising of other and wiser rede.
But and if of thine heart's set purpose thou speakest in very deed,
Of a surety the Gods and none other have stolen thy senses, I trow,
Who bidd'st that the counsels of Thunderer Zeus be forgotten now, 235
Even all that he promised to me, and sealed with the nod of his brow.
But thou, thou would'st have us obey the long-winged fowl of the air !
Go to, unto these have I not respect, and nothing I care
Whether to rightward they go to the sun and the dayspring sky,
Or whether to leftward away to the shadow-gloomed west they fly. 240

But for us, let us hearken the counsel of Zeus most high, and obey,
Who over the deathling race and the Deathless beareth sway.
One omen of all is best, that we fight for our fatherland !
And for what cause thus of the war and the strife in fear dost thou stand ?
What though all we of the host save thee death-stricken shall lie 245
By the ships of the Argive men, no fear hast thou to die !
No battle-biding spirit hast thou, no heart for the fray !
But thou, if thou hold thee aback from the fight, if thou turn away
With thy cozening words any other to cause him to flinch from the strife,
Craven, forthright stricken through by my spear shalt thou spill thy life." 250
Then onward he led, and unearthly-loud did the roar of them ring
As they followed their captain, and Zeus the thunder-triumphant King
From the mountain-heights of Ida uproused a hurricane-blast,
Sweeping the dust-cloud full on the galleys, and faintness he cast
On the hearts Achaian, but glory to Troy and to Hector he gave. 255
Putting trust in the might of their hands, by the portents of Zeus made brave,
Mightily strove they to shatter Achaia's huge-built wall ;
For they tore at the beams of the towers till the battlements shook to their fall,
And with levers they heaved at the buttress-piles, which Achaia's array
First set deep-planted in earth for the great towers' forward-stay. [wrath
There tugged they and strained, and with fierce hope flushed was their battle-
That the wall should be scaled : still flinched not the Danaan men from the path,
But the battlement-breaches with shields of the tough bull-hide did they fence,
And ever they hurled at the onward-storming foes from thence.
On-cheering Achaia's sons on the towered rampart's height 265

The Aiantes fared to and fro, and they kindled their battle-might.
And courtesy-honeyed their words were to one, but stern and fierce
To another, whom haply they marked giving back from the meeting of spears :

“ Friends, whoso of Argives is chiefest, whoso hath midward place,
Yea, whoso is worse than the rest—for that all of the earthborn race 270
May nowise be equal in war—this day is there work for you all !
Ye know it yourselves, I ween ! Let none by the braggart brawl
Of a foeman dismayed turn back to the ships in craven flight :
Nay, but press forward, and cheer ye your war-fellows on to the fight,
Peradventure Olympian Zeus will vouchsafe us, the Lightning-lord, 275
To hurl back the onset of Troy, and to chase them cityward.”

So in the forefront they shouted, and so was the battle restored.

And as fall on a wintry day thick-thronging the flakes of the snow,
When Zeus the Counsel-father bestirreth himself, to show
Unto-men what manner of arrows be shot from his quivers of cloud ;— 280
His winds hath he hushed, and he still snoweth on, till his white pall shroud
High mountain-crests, huge forelands that loom through the laden air,
And the clover-mantled meadows, and menfolk's acres fair ;
It is shed on the grey sea's havens, it fringeth the rocky shore,
But the surge-sweep keepeth it back ; all else is covered o'er 285
With its veil, when heavily earthward the shower of Kronion doth pour ;
So flew thick-thronging the stones by foes fast hurled against foes,
These down on the Trojans hailing, from Troy on Achaia those :
O'er all the rampart the roar of the rattling thunder rose.

Howbeit not yet had the Trojans and Hector the glorious in war 290

Burst through the rampart-gates and the grip of the massy bar,
 But that Zeus enkindled Sarpedon, the Counsel-father's scion,
 To rush on the Argives, as rusheth on wreath-horned heifers a lion.
 Straightway before him the round of his shapely shield he held,
 Fair-fashioned of hammered brass, which the coppersmith wrought to weld 295
 At his forge, and within stitched fold over fold of the tough bull-hide
 With rivets of gold that encompassed it round upon every side ;
 This cast he before him, and brandishing twin spears forth did he stride.
 As a lion mountain-nurtured he went, which hath lacked o'erlong
 The savour of flesh, and the dauntless spirit within him is strong 300
 Even to the thick-walled fold, as he prowleth for sheep, to fare :
 For though he shall find at his coming the herdmen gathered there [bay,
 With their dogs and their spears keeping watch o'er the sheep to hold him at
 Yet he will not be chased from the steading or ever he make assay,
 Or ever he leap on the flock and snatch from their midst the prey, 305
 Or a sudden-hurling hand with a javelin shall reach him and slay ;
 Even so was Sarpedon the godlike stirred by the strength of his heart
 To leap on the rampart, and burst the battlement-fence apart.
 And he cried to Hippolochus' child, unto Glaukus, a prince of the host :
 " Glaukus, wherefore have we twain ever been honoured the most 310
 With the chief of the seats, with the wine of the feast, with the choice of the
 In Lycia, while all men revere us as though of the Gods we were ? [roast
 And by Xanthus' banks we possess a domain both great and fair,
 Lovely with orchard-close and with fruitful wheat-sown land.
 Wherefore we ought this day in the front of the Lycians to stand 315

Facing the brunt of the battle, the hottest flame of the fray,
That this one and that of the Lycians corslet-sheathed may say :
'Not in inglorious fashion in Lycia these bear sway,
Even our kings : of a truth on the fatling sheep feast they,
And the choice of the honey-sweet wine : howbeit their battle-might 320
Is goodly, for lo, mid the foremost champions of Lycia they fight !'
Ah brother, if thou and I—might we 'scape but from this one war—
Were doomed to be ageless thereafter and deathless for evermore,
Then it is not I in the forefront of battle would hazard my life,
Nor thee would I kindle to plunge mid the glory-wafting strife : 325
But now—for that fates of death unnumbered be standing around, [found—
And none may outrun them, and none that by cunning may shun them is
Let us on, till a foeman, or we by a foe, shall be triumph-crowned !"

So spake he, and turned not Glaukus aside, neither disobeyed :
Straight forward they charged, on-leading the Lycian battle-aid. 330
And Menestheus, Peteos' scion, beheld them, and shuddered with dread,
For against his tower their onslaught ruin-fraught they sped.
And he glanced down the line of Achaians, if haply his eyes might discern
Some chieftain whose arm from his comrades the tide of destruction might turn.
And lo, the Aiantes twain, the battle-insatiate, he spied 335
Standing, and Teucer, even as forth of his tent he hied,
Full nigh. Yet he could not be heard, though he sent forth his mightiest shout,
For the din, for the heavenward-soaring roar of the battle-rout,
For the clash of the smitten shield, for the clang of the helmet-crest,
And of gates, for that shut were they all, and ever against them pressed 340

But he spake to Oileus' scion the swift-winged word straightway : 365

"Aias, do ye twain, thou, and with thee Lykomédês the strong,
Stand firm, to the mighty strife on-cheering the Danaan throng.
But thither will I, the brunt of the battle with these will I bear, | there."
And will speed back again when mine arm shall have wrought deliverance
So did he speak, and Aias Telamon's son was gone, 370
And beside him Teucer his brother, the selfsame father's son :
And bearing the bow of Teucer Pandion with these departed.
So when they were come to the tower of Menestheus the mighty-hearted,
Passing within the wall—to the sorely bestead were they coming—
Came swarming over the breastwork as hurricane-clouds black-looming 375
The stalwart captains and warrior-chiefs of their Lycian foes :
Then man against man into battle they hurled, and the war-yell rose.
First Telamonian Aias a man of the Lycians slew,
Epikles the mighty-hearted, Sarpedon's comrade true,
For he hurled with a jagged stone on the height of the wall that lay 380
Huge, by the breastwork within,—not lightly a man might essay
To bear it with both hands up, were he never so stalwart-young,
Such men as be now,—yet he swung it on high, and he hurled mid the throng.
Through the four-coned helmet it burst, and it crushed the bones of his head
All to a mingled mass, and the life from the frame of him fled, 385
As headlong down like a diver he plunged from the great tower's height.
Then Teucer at Glaukus, Hippolochus' strong son, sped the flight
Of a shaft, as he leapt on the lofty wall, and there did he smite
Where he spied how his arm was unshielded, and quelled his battle-delight.
Back from the rampart he sprang ere any might mark it, in fear 390

Lest a foeman should see him smitten, and vaunt with triumph-jeer.
 Then came on Sarpedon anguish as Glaukus turned him away,
 So soon as he knew : yet the hero forgot not the joy of the fray,
 But he drave at Alkmaon the scion of Thestor with deadly aim, [came 395
 And he stabbed him, and plucked out the spear : down-dragged by the lance he
 Headlong, and over him rattled his harness with brass rich-dight.
 On the breastwork Sarpedon laid hold, and with hands of giant might
 Tugged, and in one huge ruin it toppled and fell, and bared
 Was the rampart above, and a path for the feet of the host was prepared.
 Yet shoulder to shoulder did Aias and Teucer withstand him : the one 400
 Smote with his arrow the baldric athwart his breast that shone
 Upbearing his shield ; but Zeus from his offspring turned away
 Death's doom, that he should not be slain by the sterns of the ships that day.
 Then leapt on him Aias, and stabbed at his buckler, but not through the shield
 Did the brass cleave ; yet with the shock in mid-fury of onset he reeled. 405
 Back from the breastwork a little he drew, yet he would not yield
 Wholly therefrom, for his soul with the hope of triumph burned.
 But he shouted, as unto the godlike Lycian heroes he turned :
 " Ho Lycians, why are ye slack ?—is your battle-fire waxen acold ?
 Hard task should it be for me, were I never so stalwart-bold, 410
 To burst through the rampart, and clear you a path to the ship-fringed shore !
 On ! —follow with me, for the work shall be lighter when hands shall be more."
 So spake he, and they, fear-thrilled by their captain's chiding word,
 Battleward pressed the fiercer around that counsel-lord,
 And the Argives closed their ranks, and abode them with hearts unquelled 415

The rampart within ; and a toil most mighty of these was beheld.
For neither prevailed the stalwart children of Lycia to lay
The Danaans' rampart low, and to make to the galleys a way,
Nor yet could the Danaan spearmen aback from the rampart beat
The Lycian heroes, when once they had set thereby their feet. 420
And even as two men strive at the boundary-line of their lands
In a field that is parted between them, with measuring-rods in their hands,
And in narrow space hard wrestle the twain each man for his right ;
By the battlements so were they parted, and raged thereover the fight
Of the warriors that hewed at the bull-hide bucklers, and rained down blows 425
Evermore on the tasselled targets that shielded the hearts of their foes.
And the pitiless brass through the flesh of many a warrior tare,
Whosoever in turning had left his back but a moment bare :
Yea, clear through the buckler of many a hero the fierce thrust went. [430
And the towers all round and the battlements reeked with the blood besprent
Which the slaughter-fury of Troy and Achaia dashed about.
Yet not even so might they put the host of Achaia to rout ;
But it was with them as with a toil-bowed woman righteous-souled—
In her scales be the weights and the wool, and the balance on high doth she hold
Poised level, that so may the hard-earned bread to her babes be doled ; 435
So poised was the battle, and neither scale of the war sank down
Or ever to Hector Zeus vouchsafed the triumph-renown,
Ere first through Achaia's rampart the son of Priam sprang.
To the Trojans he cried, and his shout through the roar of the battle rang :
" On, horse-quelling Trojans, on !—dash down the Argives' wall ! 440

Hurl ye the brands till a fiery rain on their galleys shall fall !”

So spake he cheering them onward, and all they heard with their ears.
Onward they charged at the wall in a throng : by the tower-beam tiers
Scaled they the height, while gleamed in their hands keen-pointed spears.
Then a stone that in front of the gateway stood seized Hector, and bare— 445
As a crag broad-set on its base, and with sharp peak piercing the air :—
Not two of the brawniest men of the people with tug and strain
Might lightly upheave from the ground that stone, and set on a wain,
Such men as be now ; yet with ease did he swing it on high alone,
Made light to his hand by Counsel-hider Kronos' son :— 450
And as when some shepherd wight in the one hand lightly hath caught
And uptoseth the fleece of a ram, and the weight unto him is as naught,
Even so that stone at the gate-planks Hector unswerving bore,
At the fencing-beams that warded the massy-welded door,— [455
Twin-leaved were the gates, and high, and within were there two bars passed
From post unto post cross-wise, and one bolt gripped them fast :—
Close came he, and planted him firmly, and hurled it amidst of the gate,
With his feet wide-set, that his uttermost strength might speed its weight.
Burst were the hinges asunder, the stone with its thunderbolt-leap
Fell inward, the gates roared loud, and against its resistless sweep 460
Availed not the bars, and the planks sprang shivered to right and to left
From its onrush ; and Hector the glorious leapt through the breach wide-cleft
With brows as the night sudden-falling, and flashed the terrible sheen
Of the brass wherewithal he was sheathed, and he grasped two lances keen
In his hands. There was none might have stayed him that met him as onward
he came, 465

Save the Gods, when he leapt through the gate, and with fire were his eyes aflame.
And he cried to the host of Troy, mid the press as he turned him about,
To scale the rampart : was none but obeyed that heart-stirring shout.
There were some swarmed over the wall forthright, there were some 'gan pour
Through the huge-framed gates : then fled the Danaans quaking sore
Mid the hollow galleys, and rose unceasing the battle-roar.



